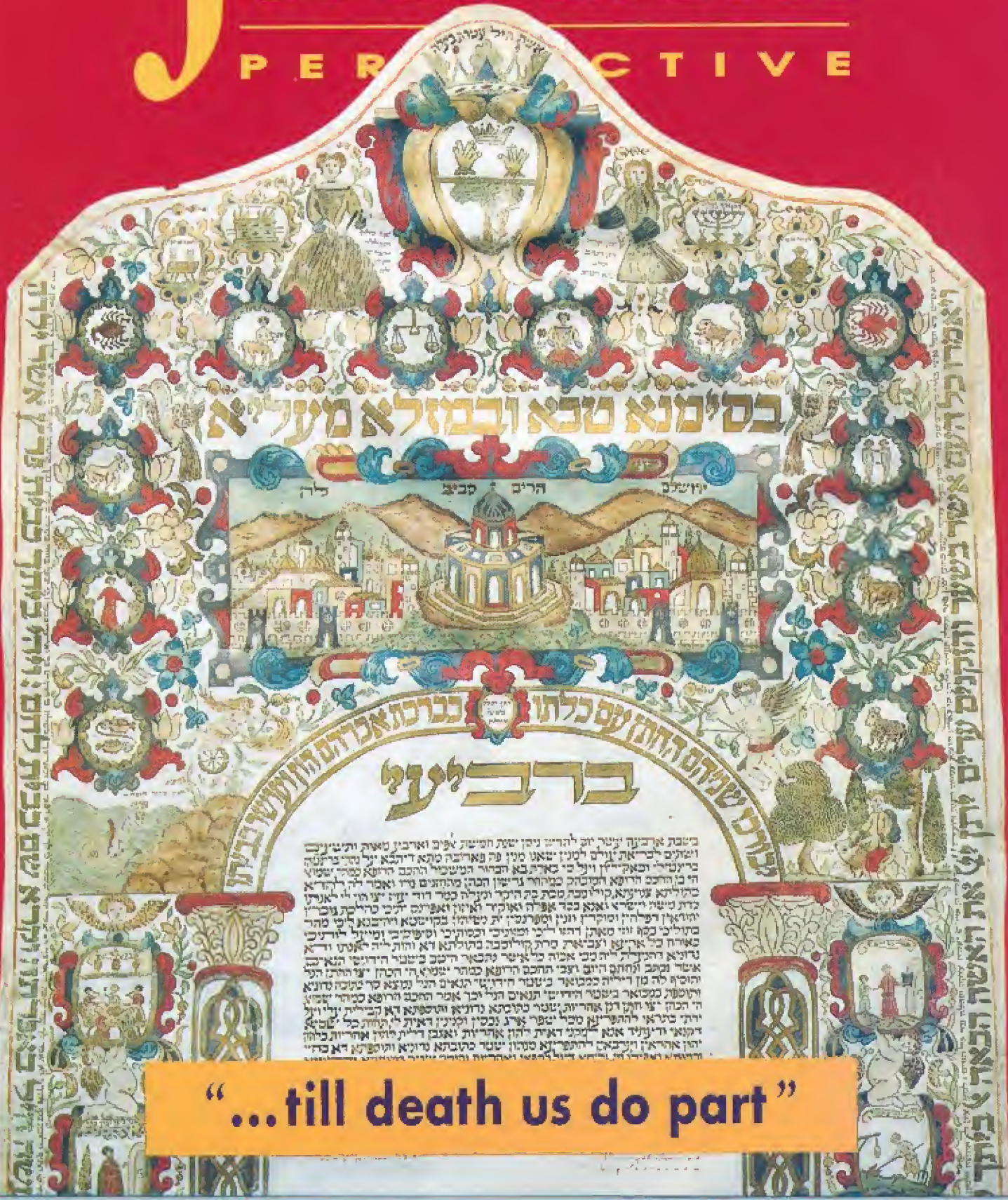


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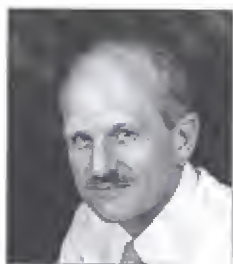


“...till death us do part”

Perspective on This Issue

Issues of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE usually contain four to five articles of comparable length. This issue has three articles, two of which are extended exegetical treatments of single verses from Jesus' teaching—Luke 16:18 and Matthew 16:19. The third is an attempt to identify the site of a famous miracle.

The Jerusalem School's unique perspective—"a Jerusalem perspective," encourages the translation of passages from the synoptic gospels to Hebrew, and their comparison with parallels in other ancient Jewish literature. In "And' or 'In order to' Remarry," p. 10, **David Bivin** does just that. He suggests a Hebrew reconstruction for Jesus's statement in



Luke 16:18, "Any man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery," and then compares the statement with a number of relevant early rabbinic texts.

With the high rate of divorce and remarriage in western society, Bivin's article is a timely piece of scholarship. His conclusions suggest that Jesus, siding with the school of Shammai's stricter ruling on divorce and remarriage, strengthened the position of the wronged spouse.

Bivin is the current director of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Arriving in Israel in 1963, only a year after the late Robert Lindsey's revolutionary discovery that Luke was written before Mark, he became one of Lindsey's first students in Jerusalem. Bivin was also the student of Hebrew University professors David Flusser, Shmuel Safrai and the late Yechezkel Kutscher. A native of Oklahoma, Bivin came to Israel on a Rotary Foundation Fellowship for postgraduate studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

■ Many explorers of the Holy Land in this century and the last, such as the German scholar Gustaf Dalman, have searched for the site of Jesus' "Miracle of the Swine." The spot where

a herd of pigs rushed headlong into the lake is located somewhere along the Sea of Galilee's eastern or southern coast. But where? In "Gergesa: Site of the Demoniac's Healing," p. 18, **Mendel Nun** brings his intimate knowledge of the Sea of Galilee to bear on this topographical mystery.

Galilean fisherman, kibbutz member, author and foremost expert on the Sea of Galilee, Nun was born into a Zionist family in Latvia in 1918. In 1939 he immigrated to Palestine where he became a member of Ein Gev, which today is a thriving, modern kibbutz on the lake's



eastern shore. For the next twenty years he worked as a fisherman on the lake. It was during this period that he became interested in ancient fishing methods. In 1964 his book, *Ancient Jewish Fishing* (in Hebrew) was published,

for which he was awarded the Ben-Zvi Prize. His Hebrew monograph on the Sea of Galilee appeared in 1977.

■ Knowing the Jewish literary and cultural background is imperative for gaining a full understanding of Jesus' teaching. The Hebrew Scriptures were at the heart of first-century Jewish culture. Ancient Jews spent their time telling, retelling and supplementing stories from the Bible. The result was a high level of familiarity with its contents. So thoroughly did they know the biblical text that a speaker could direct his audience's attention to a passage by simply alluding to one or two of its words.

One of Jesus' most pivotal sayings, Matthew 16:19—"I will give you the keys of the king-

dom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"—contains the Hebrew idioms "keys of the kingdom" and "bind" and "loose." In "Stewards of God's Keys," p. 26, *JP* contributing editor **Joseph Frankovic** addresses these idioms. Providing their literary background, he helps the reader



appreciate the great extent to which biblical language saturated the speech of ancient Jews living in the land of Israel. He offers the reader an opportunity to catch yet another glimpse of the sophisticated methods that Jesus regularly employed to teach his audiences.

Frankovic is a student at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. in Midrash under the direction of Prof. Burt Visotsky. A regular contributor to *JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE*, Frankovic has worked closely with Jerusalem School members Dr. Robert Lindsey and Prof. Brad Young.

The letters to the Editor are the first thing that most people read after picking up a newspaper or magazine. There is good reason for this behavior: one can quickly survey what other readers are thinking. The "Letters" column is a forum for the exchange of information and ideas. This column provides a lively arena where the debate for truth and the struggle for men and women's minds rage. In short, this is high-interest material. Small wonder that readers usually turn first to the letters to the Editor.

I am pleased that *JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE*'s new format has allowed us, among other things, to expand the "Letters" column, which we call "Readers' Perspective." Apparently, our readers are also pleased, since they are writing to the Editor in increasing numbers.

Based on the letters appearing in this issue, one could say that *JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE* has taken a step forward. A well-known Jewish blessing is appropriate: בָּרוּךְ שֶׁהֵחֵי וְקִיַּמנוּ וְהַעֲמִינוּ לְפָנֶיךָ ה' (ba-RUK she-he-he-YA-nu ve-hi-ye-MA-nu ve-hi-gi-A-nu la-ze-MAN ha-ZEH, Blessed be He who has kept us alive, preserved us and enabled us to reach this time!)

This issue's letters are an outstanding mix: one reader questions the importance of the Jerusalem School's methodology; another complements the magazine for a job well done in preparing the Lindsey memorial issue; still another asks for information about tithing; two readers take issue with a previously published letter whose author characterized Jesus as a "marginal figure in Jewish history"; a prisoner thanks us for providing him a free subscription and a pen pal; finally, a reader even makes a significant contribution to synoptic research.

I am confident that with the expanded "Letters" column our readers will have greater opportunity for stimulating exchange. As the magazine's circulation expands, I realize that the task of selection will become more challenging. Nevertheless, we pledge to consider the letters we receive thoughtfully and publish as many of them as space will allow.

David Birin

Editor

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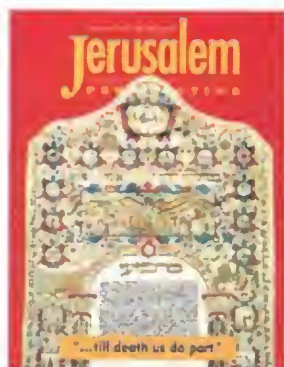
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COVER: ketubah (marriage deed) from Poduzh, 1732. Groom: the physician Samuel, son of the physician, Geison ha-Cohen of the cantors. Bride: Colomba daughter of David Aziz. Dimensions: 88.7 x 59 cm. Photo courtesy of The Israel Museum.

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■ “And” or “In order to” Remarry *David Bivin*

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For centuries one of the most controversial issues in the church has been divorce and remarriage. Is it permissible to divorce one's spouse? If so, on what grounds? More explosive is the question of remarriage. Can a divorcee remarry while his or her former spouse is still living? Starting from the only verse in Luke's gospel that mentions both divorce and marriage, this article attempts to show that the controversy stems from a failure to recognize the Semitic nuance of just one small word. Misconstruing Jesus's warning, Christian expositors have offered interpretations that, in some cases, have resulted in irreparable damage to the lives of the laity.

Sidebar:

First-century Bill of Divorce

17

An amazing archaeological discovery, a first-century bill of divorce written on papyrus, was found near the Dead Sea. In the newly discovered document, the husband Yehosef [Joseph] son of Naksan “releases and sends away” his wife, Miriam daughter of Yehonatan [Jonathan]. According to the terms of the divorce, Miriam is free “to become the wife of any Jewish man she may wish.” These legal formulas differ only slightly from those employed today in Jewish bills of divorce.

■ Gergesa: Site of the Demoniac's Healing *Mendel Nun*

18

One of the most intriguing miracle stories in the life of Jesus is that of the demoniac and the herd of swine that plunged headlong into the water on the Sea of Galilee's eastern shore. Gergesa is one of three possible candidates for the site of this miracle. Accompanied by illuminating photographs and maps, the author identifies Gergesa as the most probable location for the healing of the demon-possessed man.

■ *Thinking Like the Sages:*

Stewards of God's Keys *Joseph Frankovic*

26

Opening a window on the world of Jesus, a world in which Jewish sages regularly hinted at verses of Scripture in very sophisticated ways, this article attempts to identify the verses lurking behind the expressions “keys of the kingdom” and “bind” and “loose” in Matthew 16:19. So subtle are such allusions that we tend to overlook them. The author shows that developing a sensitivity to rabbinic methods of scriptural interpretation is indispensable if we are to appreciate the subtleties of Jesus' teaching.

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Readers' Perspective



■ Feminism and the Mother of Jesus

I am intrigued by the comments of Mrs. C. M. Didsbury in the July–September 1995 issue of *JP*. She finds the situation of women in the Second Temple period depressing and asks two interesting questions: How did women express their spirituality? Did they have any power? She adds that Mary was a woman and God loved and used her.

While I sympathize with Mrs. Didsbury's concerns, I suspect these questions would have mystified Mary. A correlation between power and spiritual expression seems to arise mainly from minds steeped in modern feminist thought.

The Bible in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures always holds out a full range of spiritual expression to any member of the human race who reaches out to God. "You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13) is only one example. Power, in the sense of social, political and religious influence and authority, can be useful, but historically it is more likely to corrupt spirituality than to encourage it.

Women have always played an influential role, and in many periods of Jewish and Christian history have held serious leadership positions. One of my favorite biblical characters is Huldah, the prophetess (2 Kings 22). We are told little about her other than her husband's occupation—keeper of the wardrobe—and her residence in the second quarter of Jerusalem. The fact that the gate at the southern end of the Temple Mount is called the "Huldah Gate" probably has nothing to do with her. However, she was the person from whom advice was sought when the scrolls were discovered and King Josiah found they were in deep trouble with God after years of spiritual indifference.

When I visit the Huldah Gate area I often fantasize about Huldah sitting in the gates, available but ignored for years while the power brokers rushed in and out on important business. However, when the moment of crisis occurred and

the "movers and shakers" needed to know how to get back into God's good graces, whom did they call? She told them the truth, no holds barred. We are not told what she did after that. I suspect she continued reading the scrolls, talking to God and praying for the power brokers. And generally expressing her spirituality—unfettered and uninfluenced by the need to play power politics.

I am not opposed to women rising to places of leadership. I, personally, am a better reader of scrolls than a keeper of the wardrobe, and I affirm that right and obligation of all God's creatures to find and use their spiritual gifts. However, I find it worrisome that many of our bright young women are being told that they cannot express their spirituality unless they gain positions of power. I suspect that Huldah, Mary and a great cloud of feminine witnesses are gazing down upon us with amused bewilderment.

JoAnn Magnuson
Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A.

■ Lindsey Memorial Issue

I thoroughly enjoyed *JP* 49 (Oct.–Dec. 1995). Thank you for sharing Dr. Lindsey's insights and just how deep and how wide his love of Messiah really was. The nature of Christ leapt from the pages of testimony depicting Dr. Lindsey's life.

The Lord has raised up truly great vessels in Dr. Lindsey and those who are continuing in the work he started. Blessed be the Lord, and blessed be the work of His hands.

Jeanne Miterko
Trumbull, Connecticut, U.S.A.

■ Was Jesus Marginal?

The enclosure [*JP* 49, p. 6] of your ex-reader, Dr. Cohn, strikes me as similar to what is taking place within the Roman Catholic Church right

now. Switzerland's Küng, Germany's Drewerman, Brazil's Leonardo Boff, a French bishop, and others, have almost placed themselves outside the church's pale because they have adopted a theological stance like Dr. Cohn's. For the most part, the church has not been swayed by these radical theologians. I know this from many discussions with the faithful. At the same time, the church is producing enough followers of these undesirable theologians to create a "new religion."

Wolfgang Kruse
Burgkirchen, Germany

I am surprised, and not a little disappointed, that Dr. Cohn persists in repeating polemics that I disputed a year ago in correspondence with him. (Enclosed is a copy of my October 11, 1994 letter to Dr. Cohn). Unfortunately, he has not read *JP* issues 3, 4, or 42, 43 and 44, which deal quite adequately with "but I say unto you" and "hate" one's family. His doctorate in organic chemistry appears to be inadequate in dealing with theology.

Douglas (Dagan) Ben-Shimon
Jerusalem, Israel

Below are a few of the arguments in Ben-Shimon's 1994 letter to Cohn:

1. The New Testament states quite clearly that it was Jesus' disciples, not Jesus, who plucked corn on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:1-2).

2. Can anyone believe that the Torah required Jesus himself to stone the woman taken in adultery (Jn. 8:10) when no witnesses remained to testify against her? Who is truer to the Torah, Jesus, who sought repentance of the sinner, or those who were out for blood, lacking in any compassion?

3. Did Jesus expect to be taken literally when he advised that one should amputate one's hand, or that one should be castrated in a physical way in order to enter the Kingdom of God? Did Moses expect Jews to circumcise their hearts literally and physically? (Deut. 10:16. Also cf. Jer. 4:4; Joel 2:13). There will always be literalists, it seems, who cannot distinguish between picturesque speech and non-picturesque speech.

4. One has only to visit any so-called "holy" site to see the intrusion of money-grabbing merchants. Jesus probably made some objection to some such intrusion, the traders got annoyed and excited, bystanders joined in the quarrel, a few tables got overturned—chickens, pigeons, and maybe a few goats, scattering in all directions chased by their anxious owners—and the whole thing becomes Jesus cleansing the Temple with a whip! If such had really been the case, no doubt the Roman guards looking down from their fort

would have been quick to intervene.

5. How can Jesus, who has just been scourged and is on his way to a painful death, be accused of lack of compassion in warning the women of Jerusalem of the fate that awaits the city (Lk. 23:27-31; cf. Jer. 22:5-9; note also Lk. 13:34-35 [Mt. 23:37-39]; Lk. 19:41-44, "He beheld the city and wept over it.")

6. "But I say unto you." This question has been adequately dealt with in *JP* 3 (Dec. 1987), 2; *JP* 4 (Jan. 1988), 4; *JP* 42, 43 and 44 (Jan.-Jun. 1994), 37, 42, note 11.

7. "Hate one's mother and father." Quite clearly the English word "hate" does not convey the meaning of the Hebrew, or even Greek source (see *JP* 42, 43 and 44 [Jan.-Jun. 1994], 26, 31-32, 35, note 19).

■ Does It Matter Who Wrote First?

Papias said Matthew wrote first. Someone else said Mark wrote first. Lindsey said Luke wrote first. Papias was probably right.

Does it matter? Why can't we just accept that the four gospel writers were four independent individual persons used by God to write *one complete Gospel*? Why, oh why, do learned people love to waste precious time, money and paper on unimportant matters?

Pieter Kraay
Bishop's Stortford, Herts., England



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To be accurate, Lindsey believed, as does Mr. Kraay, that Matthew wrote first; however, Lindsey also believed that the author of the "Gospel according to Matthew" was neither the disciple Matthew nor the Matthew to whom Papias referred. Although there is a church tradition—dating not earlier than 175 A.D.—that the disciple Matthew composed the first gospel, the Gospel of Matthew itself nowhere names its author. (See Joseph Frankovic, "Pieces to the Synoptic Puzzle: Papias and Luke 1:1-4," JP 40 (Sept./Oct. 1993), 12-13.)

For the importance of ascertaining which synoptic gospel was written first, see the Conclusion in Lindsey's "Unlocking the Synoptic Problem: Four Keys for Better Understanding Jesus," JP 49 (Oct.-Dec. 1995), 16-17. —Ed.

Tithing and True Prosperity

I am a high school teacher of mathematics and electronics, but for many years my wife and I have been involved with part-time ministry work with other pastors in Cape Town, South Africa, and now for the past year in Windhoek, Namibia.

We feel the Lord is calling us into full-time ministry. I am nearly fifty years old and we have three children whom we have given Hebrew names. I was raised as a non-Jew, but I know my grandfather came from Lithuania and could speak German, Polish, Yiddish and English. When he was still very young he first moved to Chicago, U.S.A., and after a few years came to South Africa where he lived the rest of his days.

All my life I have had an unexplained intense interest in Jewish culture and strongly suspect my forefathers were Jewish. I know there are some Jews in South Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom with the same surname that I have. My wife has the same history basically. Her maiden name is "Wasserfull," and she has heard that there are Jews in the world with that surname, too.

We are strong believers in Jesus as our Saviour and Messiah and are indeed very interested to learn all you can teach us about the Jewish background of the New Testament. Can you please recommend a Hebrew language course? Our children want to learn Hebrew, too, and of course, we pray to be able to visit Israel someday.

I have a burning question about tithing: I have tithed all my working life, which is about twenty-five years. So according to all of the prosperity preachers I have heard on cassette tapes, I should be rich by now. But I am not! Quite the reverse, in fact. Over the last six or seven years I have slid rapidly downhill financially, while going uphill spiritually. During this period I was twice made

redundant and had to lose my house and car because I could not keep up with the payments. Now how does that fit in with the "Law" of tithing? I was until recently unemployed for two and a half years—and there is no social security in this part of the world. The southern half of Africa has a forty percent unemployment rate! I had to leave South Africa to find a job in Namibia where things are marginally better. I am now a school teacher earning half of what I used to get when I was manager of a factory training department in Cape Town.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am still determined to keep on tithing. But now my motive is not one of "getting." I tithe because I wish to help spread the gospel. I believe in giving as much as possible. Is it not true there is no New Testament "Law" of tithing, but one should give "as you are able"?

I can testify that during my terrible unemployment my family never went hungry and we never had to sleep outdoors under bushes as some have to do. Our merciful God has indeed never failed us. We had nothing, yet we never lacked the essentials of life either. During those two and a half years, I had the opportunity to be an assistant pastor in Cape Town. We received food and shelter, but no pay. Nevertheless, it was spiritually very rich. We fellowshiped with people of all races and had a blessed time.

E. V. Feit
Windhoek, Republic of Namibia

It seems to me that your spiritual pilgrimage has enabled you to answer your own question about tithing.

Regarding beginner's Hebrew courses, I recommend you start with my Aleph-Bet: A Beginner's Introduction to Reading & Writing Hebrew. The course includes five two-hour videocassettes and a companion study guide. It can be ordered from the publisher: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, P.O. Box 293040, Dayton, OH 45429. Tel. 513-434-4550. Fax 513-439-0230. The study guide and accompanying videocassettes are \$123. (Add \$10 for shipping outside the U.S.) The PAL version of this video course can be obtained for £75 through CFI Communications, 15 Teddington Business Park, Station Road, Teddington, Middx., TW11 9BQ, U.K. Tel. 181-943-0363. Fax: 181-943-3767. (Add £6 for shipping outside the U.K.)

After completing Aleph-Bet, you should continue with my Fluent Biblical & Modern Hebrew home-study audio course. The course is designed for independent self-study and includes a textbook and six audiocassettes. It is published by the Centre for the Study of Biblical Research, P.O. Box 2050, Redlands, CA 92373-0641. Tel. 909-793-4669. Fax 909-793-1071. The textbook and accompanying

audiocassettes are \$99. (Add \$9 for shipping outside the U.S.) Residents of the U.K. can order the audio course from CFI Communications (see address above) for £45. (Add £5 for shipping outside the U.K.) — Ed.

■ Mark 15:34— Did God Forsake Jesus?

I've been thinking about Psalm 22 lately and wondering if our Savior wasn't perhaps giving one final teaching even from the cross. His cry of "My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?" couldn't be the voice of a despairing man. Although I can't possibly imagine the pain that Jesus was experiencing, I don't believe that God the Father ever "forsook" him. I've heard sermons explaining that God the Father couldn't look on the sin-laden body of His Son on the cross of crucifixion. However, I find the reference to Psalm 22 to be more enlightening. The details of the crucifixion of the Lamb of God couldn't have been more clearly delineated than in that Psalm written hundreds of years earlier.

Oh, wait! I just looked at Luke 23. It doesn't have any mention of the Psalms 22:1 citation. Does that mean that the writers of Matthew (27:46ff.) and Mark (15:34ff.) inserted this reference to bring the attention of the reader to the highly prophetic text of Psalm 22? I am astounded by how many references to that turning point in human history, the crucifixion of Jesus, are made in Psalm 22: "He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him" (Ps. 22:8; cf. Mt. 27:43); "They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture" (Ps. 22:18; cf. Mt. 27:35, Mk. 15:24, Lk. 23:34b); "They pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps. 22:16b; implied in Mt. 27:35a, Mk. 15:24a, Lk. 23:33); "All they that see me laugh me to scorn" (Ps. 22:7a; cf. Mt. 27:39, Mk. 15:29, Lk. 23:35b).

I see that this work you are doing is much more involved than I realized. I admire your scholarship and dedication. I will pray for "smooth sailing" in your reconstruction of the Hebrew biography of Jesus. Thank you very much for the light you are shining on the object of our adoration, the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe we will serve Him better when we know and understand Him better.

Nancy Johnsen
Fremont, California, U.S.A.

Our reader wrote without knowing that the late Robert Lindsey has discussed Mark 15:34 in a forthcoming article titled "Paraphrastic Gospels" (JP 51 [Apr.—Jun. 1996], 10–15). Lindsey analyzes the Lukan and Markan versions of Jesus'

cry from the cross. If, as Lindsey suggests in his article, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is Mark's replacement for Luke's "Into your hand I entrust my spirit," Nancy Johnsen may have provided the reason for Mark's substitution of a verse from Psalm 22—Mark viewed the whole of Psalm 22 as a foretelling of the words Jesus uttered while hanging on the cross. — Ed.

■ Prisoner's Plight

I was once lost, but, praise the Lord, I've been found! I'm writing you for two reasons. The first reason is because I wrote you asking you for a subscription to your magazine and for a pen pal, and you provided me with both! You referred me to the most loving Christians I could ever ask for. I've been praying to the Lord to help me out and every time I've asked him for something, he has provided it.

I write companies like yours asking for anything regarding the Lord's Word, but I always add that they can even send me a damaged copy that they can't sell. So far I've received a Dake's Bible, Strong's Concordance, Vine's Expository Dictionary and the works of Josephus. I've written so many companies since my two-year imprisonment, and out of fifty-four companies, six have sent me material that I've requested. Sixteen companies said they couldn't help me out, and thirty-two of them never wrote me back. (All of these were Christian companies.)

But I do want to say "Thank you" to JP because you not only helped me out, but you went to extremes to do exactly what I asked of you. That to me is true love and fellowship for the Lord's body of believers (Eph. 2:20, 21), and the fulfilling of passages like Galatians 6:2, which says to bear one another's burdens.

David Citarelli
Punta Gorda, Florida, U.S.A.

"Remember those in prison as though in prison with them" (Heb. 13:3). JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE sends free literature (including subscriptions to JP) upon the request of prisoners. David Citarelli is presently serving a sentence at the Charlotte Correctional Institution in Punta Gorda, Florida. JP readers who reside in the United States and are interested in helping with the purchase of books for Mr. Citarelli and other prisoners, may send their contributions to our affiliate in Tulsa, Oklahoma: HaKesher, 9939 S. 71st East Ave., Tulsa, OK 74133 (Tel. 918-298-2635; Fax 918-298-2426). HaKesher, directed by Ken and Lenore

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JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE welcomes letters and faxes to the editor. We will use this column to share as many of our readers' comments, queries and requests as possible.

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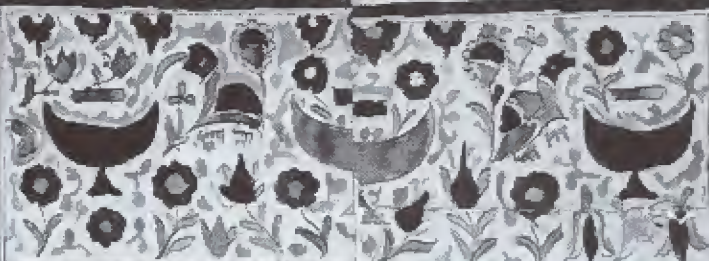
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“And” or “In order to” Remarry

by David Bivin

In the whole of Luke’s gospel, there is just one context in which the verbs “divorce” and “marry” appear together. That passage—only one verse—ought to contribute to a correct understand of Jesus’ attitude toward divorce and remarriage; however, there exists no scholarly consensus on the passage’s meaning.



בְּיָמֵינוּ שֶׁהַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי הוֹלֵךְ לְפָנֵינוּ

[illegible]

האסות יקרת פיו ברה פיה וזוה ספר פשוט

[illegible]

Handwritten notes and sketches on a piece of paper. The text is written in Hebrew. On the left, there is a small sketch of a person's head and shoulders, with the word "השם" (The Name) written above it. To the right of this, the word "השם" is written again, followed by "השם" and "השם". In the center, the word "השם" is written, followed by "השם" and "השם". On the right, there is a small sketch of a person's head and shoulders, with the word "השם" written above it. To the right of this, the word "השם" is written again, followed by "השם" and "השם".

Any man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and a man who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. (Lk. 16:18)

In the first half of Luke 16:18, Jesus appears to teach that a man who has divorced his wife should not remarry.¹ In the verse's second half, Jesus seems to say that no man should marry a divorced woman. Does this simplistic interpretation of a difficult verse do justice to Jesus' approach to Torah?

Luke 16:18 is very "Semitic," that is, it is full of Semitic idioms, an indication that Jesus may have uttered it in Hebrew or Aramaic. Members of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research have learned that the most effective way to approach a passage from the synoptic gospels is, first, to put its Greek text into Hebrew, then, study the resultant Hebrew reconstruction in light of first-century Jewish exegesis.²

Nuances of Hebrew "And"

While the English word "and" can mean "also," "as well as," or can be used like a comma to connect words, phrases and sentences, the Hebrew *vav* (and) can do the work of "but," "or," "so," "then," "because," "therefore," "namely," "since," "while," "on the contrary," and more. Hebrew frequently uses *vav* where English would use no word at all, and in such cases the best translation is simply to drop the "and" entirely. In many instances, to translate *vav* as "and" would obscure the *vav*'s true meaning.

Greek *kai* (*kai*, and), like English "and," does not have the wide range of meaning possessed by Hebrew *vav*.³ Old Testament commentators and translators are well aware of the many

idiomatic usages of *vav*, but their New Testament counterparts have only begun to examine the *kais* of the gospels. Obviously, Jewish thought heavily influences the gospels, and if, as well, Jesus uttered his sayings in Hebrew, an English translation that did not take this Hebraic background into account would fall short. Translating every *kai* literally as "and" may be as inaccurate as translating every *vav* in the Hebrew Scriptures as "and."

The "And" of Purpose

"In order to, in order that, so that" is another meaning of *vav* (and). Scholars refer to this *vav* as the "and of purpose or intention."⁴ It occurs frequently in biblical Hebrew, for example: "Let my people go, and [i.e., so that] they may worship me in the wilderness" (Exod. 7:16).⁵

Apparently, contrary to normal Greek usage, Greek's *kai* (and) in the sense of "to, in order to" occurs in the synoptic gospels. An example of this usage may exist in Lk. 16:18a: "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery."⁶

The meaning "in order to" fits Luke 16:18a better than simple "and." The Greek text⁷ reverts easily and smoothly to beautiful Hebrew: *kol ha-me-ga-RESH 'et 'ish-TO ve-no-SE? 'a-HE-ret, me-na-EF*. Anyone who divorces his wife and marries [i.e., in order to marry] another [f.] is committing adultery).⁸

Vav (and) in the sense of "in order to" is also attested in Mishnaic or Middle Hebrew, the Hebrew that many scholars in Israel believe Jesus spoke. See, for example: "He who begins to wish that his wife will die and [i.e., in order that] he will inherit her property, or that she will die and [i.e., in order that] he will marry her sister..." (Tosefta, Sotah 5:10).⁹

The Jewish Background

The background to Jesus' saying seems to be a debate between the schools of Shammai and Hillel concerning the grounds for divorce. The debate revolves around the interpretation of an expression found in Deuteronomy 24:1: "After a man has taken a wife and consummated the marriage, if she ceases to please him because he has found an *indecent* thing in her, then he shall write her a bill of divorce, hand it to her and send her away from his house."

The expression *er-VAT da-VAR*,

Page 11:
Ketubbah from Sena,
Iran, 1908. Groom: The
physician...Daniel, son of
the physician, Solomon.
Bride: Habiba, daughter
of the physician, Ephraim.
Dimensions: 68.5 x 44 cm.

Below:
"Concordia Maritale"
(marital bliss and har-
mony) symbolized in a
ketubbah from Rome,
1797.



literally, “indecentcy of thing,” is obscure. Consequently, it lends itself to various interpretations, as the rabbinic debate shows:

The school of Shammai says: “A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found a thing of indecentcy in her, for it is written, ‘because he has found an indecentcy of thing in her.’” But the school of Hillel says: “[He may divorce her] even if she ruined a dish of food [she prepared for him], for it is written, ‘because he has found an indecentcy of thing in her.’” Rabbi Akiva says: “Even if he found another more beautiful than she, for it is written, ‘if she ceases to please him.’” (Mishnah, Gittin 9:10)

According to Shammai’s interpretation, the emphasis should be on the word “indecentcy” in the phrase “indecentcy of thing.” Therefore, reversing the order of the words, he interprets the phrase as “a thing of indecentcy,”¹⁰ that is, “something indecent.” In his view, marital infidelity is the only grounds for divorce. According to Hillel, however, the emphasis should be on the word, “thing.” In Hillel’s view, a husband may divorce his wife for *anything*, for instance, for any imperfection or for any act that is offensive to him. He is permitted to divorce her even for burning his toast. Rabbi Akiva agrees that it is the husband’s right to divorce his wife for any cause, illustrating his point with an extreme example: A husband may divorce his wife even if he finds another woman who is more pleasing to him.¹¹

A key link to Jesus’ saying is the word “another” in Akiva’s statement: “Even if he found אַחֵרֶת (‘a-HE-ret, another [f.]) more beautiful than she.” Jesus’ use of this word in a divorce context makes it likely that he was attacking the view espoused by Rabbi Akiva. (Although Akiva lived approximately one hundred years after Jesus, Luke 16:18a suggests that Akiva’s view existed in Jesus’ day.) Here, Jesus gives a legal opinion. Siding with Shammai, he rules that there is only one cause for divorce—marital unfaithfulness.¹²

Luke 16:18b and “Translation-ease”

From internal and external evidence, scholars of the Jerusalem School have reached the conclusion that the earliest stratum of the synoptic gospel tradition was communicated in Hebrew; therefore, when evaluating gospel passages they apply, among others, the test of “translation-ease,” the ease with which one is



Wedding ceremony, Germany. Detail of an engraving from J. Ch. G. Bodenschatz, *Kirchliche Verfassung der heutigen Juden*, 1748.

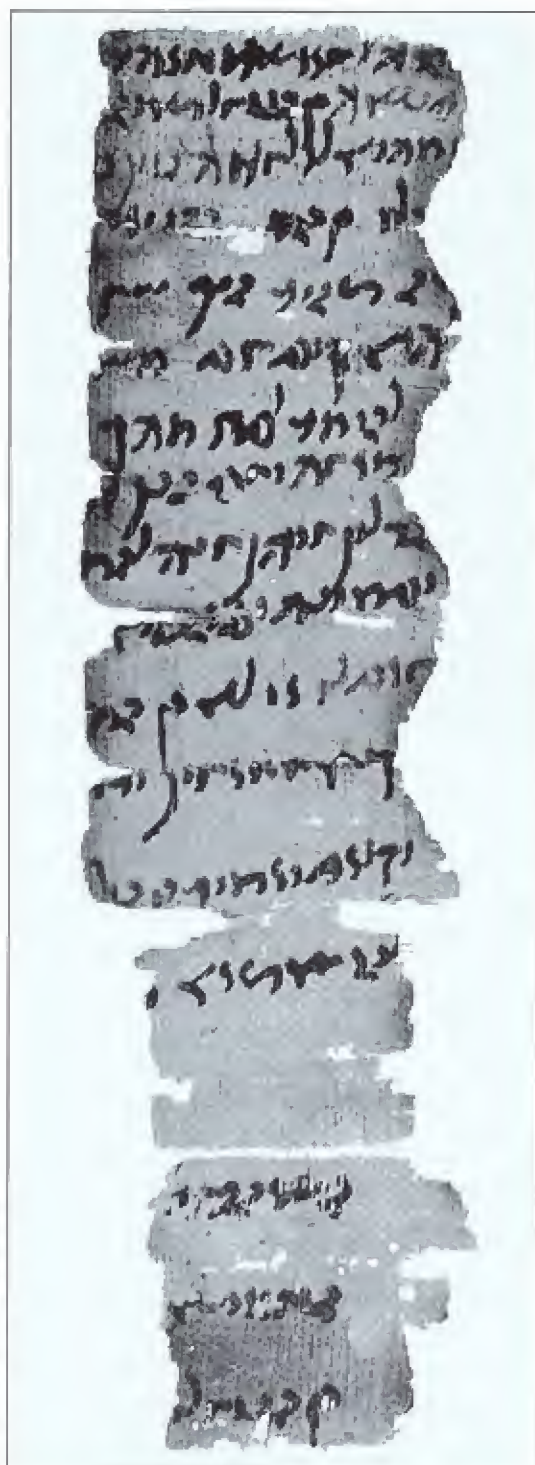
able to translate a passage to Hebrew. If a passage translates easily to Hebrew, they tend to assume it belongs to the earliest stratum of the text; if not, they suspect it may have been added, or modified, by a Greek hand during or after the text’s translation to Greek. The beautiful Greek of Luke’s prologue (Lk. 1:1–4), for instance, testifies that the prologue is a later addition to the gospel story.

The first half of Luke 16:18 translates easily into Hebrew; but its second half (literally, “and the one, a woman having been dismissed from a husband, marrying, commits adultery”) is difficult to put into Hebrew. Since the verse’s second half does not pass the “translation-ease” test, one might suspect that it was not originally part of Jesus’ saying; on the other hand, it contains a Matthean-Lukan minor agreement—Matthew and Luke (Mt. 5:32b; Lk. 16:18b) agree against Mark (Mk. 10:12) to use the word ἀπολελυμένην (*apolelymenēn*, having been dismissed [f.]). Minor agreements (see Glossary) are a strong indication of originality;¹³ therefore, it is likely that initially the saying *did* have two parts, and that Luke or the author of the First Reconstruction, the second of Luke’s two sources, modified the saying’s second part.

A Hebraic Doublet

If we assume this saying had two parts, there is a strong possibility that the second part was

Early second-century A.D. ketubbah from the “archives” of Babuta, discovered in a cave in the vicinity of the Dead Sea.



SHRINE OF THE ROCK, ISRAEL MUSEUM

the second component of a Hebrew doublet. Though superfluous to the Greek ear, repetition of words, phrases, sentences, and even stories, is characteristic of Hebrew. Parallelism—expressing the same thought in two or more different, though synonymous, ways—for instance, is the hallmark of Hebrew poetry. When teaching, Jesus frequently employed doublets (e.g., “tax collectors and sinners”; Mt. 11:19, Lk. 7:34) and parallelisms (e.g., “Do not travel Gentile

roads, and do not enter Samaritan cities” [Mt. 10:5], where “travel” is a synonym for “enter,” and “Gentile roads” is a synonym for “Samaritan cities”).¹⁴

If we reconstruct Luke 16:18b, staying as close to the Greek text as the Hebrew language will allow, we get: *וְהָיָה אִם הָאִשָּׁה הַמְּנֻשָּׁת כָּאֵף* (*ve-ha-no-SE 'et ha-i-SHAH ha-me-go-RE-shet me-na-ʿEF*, and he who marries the divorced woman commits adultery). An idiomatic translation would yield: “Furthermore, he who marries that divorced woman is committing adultery.”¹⁵

A Further Warning

Based on Luke 16:18, we can suppose that Jesus, like Shammai, holds that adultery is the only grounds for divorce; and therefore, that Jesus views the bill of divorce given by a husband who intends to marry another woman as being invalid from the outset. Thus, subsequent marriages contracted by the husband or wife are null and void, and any children produced by such marriages are illegitimate. Since future marriages of such a wife have no validity, anyone who marries her will be entering into an adulterous relationship.¹⁶ Should the divorced wife and her second husband learn of the first husband's real motive for divorcing her, they would be obligated to separate immediately.¹⁷

The second part of Jesus' saying is not addressed to the man who might marry a wife sinfully divorced—the man would not contract the marriage if he were aware of the true reason for the divorce; rather, it is a strengthening of the warning given in the doublet's first part. “Realize the far-reaching consequences of your sinful act,” Jesus warns the husband contemplating divorce. “Not only will you yourself commit adultery, you will cause your wife and her second husband to live in adultery.” Through marriage, a man and his wife become one flesh (Mt. 19:4–6). Should they divorce for reasons other than marital infidelity, any subsequent relationship into which they entered would be adulterous.

New and Old

Both parts of Luke 16:18 are exegetical innovations, that is, they are new interpretations of Scripture. The sages believed that the Torah was a bottomless well; one could dig deeper and deeper, ever gaining new insights inherent in the Torah given to Moses at Sinai. Jesus spoke of this when he said: “Every scribe

trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a landlord who brings out of his storeroom new treasures [i.e., innovative interpretations of his own] as well as old [i.e., what he has learned from his teachers]" (Mt. 13:52).

The first part of Luke 16:18 is an innovation: Jesus rules that divorcing one's wife in order to marry another is adultery. This statement goes beyond the formulations that Jesus had heard from his teachers. His interpretation "establishes or strengthens" the Torah (Mt. 5:17), that is, his innovation reinforces and clarifies the Torah. The second part of the verse is also an innovation, and more startling¹⁸ than the first: the husband who divorces his wife to marry another will not only himself break the seventh of the Ten Commandments, he may cause others to break it.¹⁹

Grounds for Divorce

Viewed from a Hebraic and Jewish perspective, Luke 16:18 does not address the question of whether divorce is ever permissible. Surely Jesus believed that a husband is permitted to divorce his wife if she is engaged in an adulterous relationship.²⁰ Nor does Luke 16:18 deal with the permissibility of remarriage after divorce. Jesus probably believed, as did his contemporaries, that both marriage partners, having terminated a marriage with a legally binding bill of divorce, were permitted to remarry.

The church in Corinth wrote to Paul asking for his rulings on several issues relating to marriage. One of these issues was what a follower of Jesus should do about an unbelieving mate whom he or she had married before becoming a believer.²¹ Paul's response: "If the unbelieving marriage partner is determined to separate, let him or her do so. The believing man or woman is not bound in such cases. God has called us to live lives of peace" (1 Cor. 7:15). In other words, if the unbelieving spouse cannot live with his or her marriage partner's new beliefs, the believing spouse should not attempt, by legal or other means, to prevent the unbelieving partner from separating. By "not bound," Paul also means, presumably, that the believing partner is free to remarry.

The sages legislated additional grounds for divorce,²² for example, infertility. They ruled that if a man had been married for ten years and still had no children, he was not exempt from the commandment to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). He was obligated to divorce his wife and marry another woman in an attempt to father children.²³

A Context for Luke 16:18?

In Luke's arrangement, there is no context for Luke 16:18, the last in a series of three contextless sayings. In Matthew's gospel, each of these sayings has its own context, perhaps indicating that Luke or the author of one of Luke's sources has joined these sayings after separating them from their contexts. Does the story in Matthew 19:3–9 (parallel to Mk. 10:2–12) provide the original context for Luke 16:18? Since Luke seems to preserve Jesus' saying better than Matthew, perhaps Luke 16:18 should be inserted into Matthew's context as a replacement for Matthew 19:9. Though conjectural, I suggest the following reconstruction:

And Pharisees approached him and tested him, saying, "May a man divorce his wife for any reason?" He answered and said, "Have you not read that he who created them, from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Thus it is that a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and the two become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined, let no one separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce and to divorce?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. But I say to you, anyone who divorces his wife to marry another woman is committing adultery; furthermore, he who marries that divorced woman is committing adultery."

What Would Jesus Do?

What would Jesus have said to a man who had divorced, or was about to divorce, his wife in order to marry another? We can suppose that, since he abhorred divorce,²⁴ he would have spoken sternly to the man. He would have told him (paraphrasing Luke 16:18): "It is detestable for you to divorce the 'wife of your youth,' the one who has shared your life and stood by you for years, in order to marry a younger, more physically attractive woman. In addition, your sin may cause others to enter adulterous relationships."

However, Jesus would have tempered his stern rebuke with compassion. He would have tried to restore the marriage. If neither the man nor his wife had yet contracted another marriage, he would have urged the man to repent and be reconciled to his wife. If the man showed a readiness to repent, before concluding the conversation, Jesus probably would have said

to the man, as he did to the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more."²⁵

Conclusion

This article illustrates how important rabbinic literature can be for gaining a perspective that allows accurate interpretation of gospel texts. The article also shows that the synoptic gospels' Hebraic background can often provide the necessary clues for understanding Jesus' words. Furthermore, the article demonstrates that even the most insignificant grammatical feature of Hebrew—in this case, one nuance of a one-letter word—can be important for understanding the words of Jesus.

The "and" in Luke 16:18a is probably the Semitic "and of purpose." This idiom together with, in the same context, the word "another" strengthen the likelihood that the background to Jesus' statement is a rabbinic debate on the meaning of *'er-VAT da-VAR* (indecenty of thing) in Deuteronomy 24:1. Like Shammai, Jesus interprets the expression as "a thing of indecency," that is, marital infidelity, strongly opposing Hillel's interpretation, which allows a man to divorce his wife "for any cause."

We can easily reconstruct Luke 16:18a, but 16:18b is difficult. Apparently, 16:18b has suffered considerably during its transmission in Greek; however, one can conjecture its original wording: "A man commits adultery if he marries a woman whose husband has divorced her in order to marry another." Luke 16:18b, just five words in Hebrew, comprise a devastatingly clear restatement of Shammai's position on the grounds for divorce. They also are a brilliant piece of exegesis.

Many a faithful Christian woman has been discarded by a husband who has found "another more beautiful than she." Though innocent, she has suffered humiliation and public ostracism. Because of her understanding of Scripture, she may have remained single the rest of her life, considering it a sin to remarry. Jesus' words should act as a warning: a husband who divorces his wife "to marry another" sets in motion a chain of disasters—in his life and the lives of many others.

lent. The results of this study were initially published in 1987 (David Bivin, "The Hebrew Connection: *va-vav*," *Dispatch from Jerusalem* [1st Quarter, 1987], 7), then revised and republished in 1989 (idem, "Hebrew Nuggets" series, "Lesson 17: *Vav* [Part 1]," *Jerusalem Perspective* 17 [Feb. 1989], 3; "Lesson 18: *Vav* [Part 2]," *Jerusalem Perspective* 18 [Mar. 1989], 3).

3. The Greek word *kai* (*kai*) can mean "and," "also," "even," "just," "as," and in certain expressions, "or." See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones with Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 857-858. Grammars and lexicons of New Testament Greek can be misleading since, often, the only support they provide for a particular nuance of *kai* is a citation from the synoptic gospels. Such citations may merely reflect the synoptic gospels' Semitic background.

4. See Francis Brown, with the cooperation of S. R. Driver and Charles Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979; reprint of *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1907)), p. 254, §3. The best categorization of the nuances of *vav* (with biblical examples of each) is found in *A New Concordance of the Bible*, ed. Abraham Even-Shoshan (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1987), p. 317 (Hebrew).

5. Other examples are: "...I will not accept so much as a thread or the thong of a sandal belonging to you, and [i.e., so that] you will not be able to say, 'It is I who made Abram rich'" (Gen. 14:23); "Do this and [i.e., so that] you may live" (Gen. 42:18); "They [Aaron and his sons] shall wash [their hands and feet] in water and [i.e., so that] they will not die" (Exod. 30:21).

6. For more than a decade, I assumed that no scholar before me had noticed this Semitic nuance of *kai* (*kai*, and). Neither standard English commentaries on Luke (e.g., *The Anchor Bible* [Doubleday], *The International Critical Commentary* [T. & T. Clark], *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* [Eerdmans]) nor the modern English translations I checked mention it. However, unique discoveries are extremely rare in the field of gospel scholarship: a legion of brilliant scholars have carefully combed the gospels. Indeed, as I prepared this article for publication, I came across a New Testament version whose translator had recognized the idiom: *The New Testament: A Private Translation in the Language of the People* by Charles B. Williams (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958). Williams' translation of Lk. 16:18a reads: "Any man who divorces his wife to marry another woman commits adultery."

Williams added a footnote to the word "to" of his translation: "And, in Aramaic source, expressing purpose." Since Williams may have gotten his insight from a reference work he used, it is likely that at least one other scholar has noticed this interesting feature of Lk. 16:18a. In any case, Williams' translation is remarkable considering the lack of attention the idiom has received. As to Williams' reference to Aramaic, it must be pointed out that the idiom also exists in Hebrew.

7. Including the opening *pas ho* (*pas ho*, anyone or everyone who...), the equivalent of Hebrew *kol* or *kol*.

This article is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Gladys Rose, née Guffy (1897–1976). The photograph was taken in November 1917, at the time of her wedding. In 1926, she fled from her husband, returning to the home of her parents in Cleveland, Oklahoma, where she raised her three children. In 1928 she was granted a divorce. A devout Christian, she believed that it would be a sin for her to remarry while her husband was still living. He remarried three times, but she remained single for the rest of her life, never even dating again. — DB



JP

1. Thus, apparently, Jesus would not consider a man an adulterer if he divorced his wife but did not remarry.

2. The conclusions presented in this article grew out of a study of the nuances of the Hebrew word *vav* (and) that I carried out in the mid-1980s. I found that many of these Hebraic nuances were displayed in the Gospels by *kai* (*kai*, and), *vav*'s Greek equivalent.

FIRST-CENTURY BILL OF DIVORCE

A bill of divorce (height: 22 cm.; width: 11.2 cm.), executed at Masada, but found in Wadi Murabba'at (published by J. T. Milik in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, eds. P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and R. de Vaux [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961], 2:104-109, plates 30-31). Written in Aramaic on papyrus, its text differs only slightly from the formula of the traditional Jewish bill of divorce used today. The document was written in the sixth year of the Great Revolt (Oct., 71 A.D.), over a year after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.

This is a "doubled" or "tied" bill of divorce, as it is called in the Talmud. The original bill of divorce is written on the upper part of the page (lines 1-11), and the letters and lines are very crowded. Below, following a gap, the text has been written a second time in large letters, and with ample space between the lines. The upper part of the writ was rolled up and tied with string, which ran through the document and encircled it vertically and diagonally several times. The witnesses signed on the back of the document, their signatures written perpendicular to the lines within the document, each signature beside a knot of the string—there are as many knots as there are witnesses. Tying the document closed prevented forgeries. The text of the bill of divorce was repeated on the exposed lower part of the page so that it could be studied without opening the tied and signed part.

TRANSLATION (by David Rivin)

Lines 1-11: On the first of [the month of] Marheshvan, year six, at Masada. I, Yehosef [Joseph] son of Naksan from [] h, living at Masada, of my own free will, do this day release and send you away, Miriam daughter of Yehonatan [Jonathan] from Nablata, living at Masada, who have, until now, been my wife, so that you are free on your part to become the wife of any Jewish man you may wish. Here you have from me [literally, from my hand] a bill of divorce and a writ of release. Likewise, I give back [to you the whole dowry], and if there are any ruined or damaged goods or [] n, I will reimburse you fourfold, according to the current price. Furthermore, upon your request, [if lost,] I will replace this document for you, as is appropriate.

Lines 12–25: [A repetition of the text in almost identical wording]

LINES 26-29: [Signed] Yehosef son of Naksan, by his own hand
 Eliezer son of Malkah, witness
 Yehosef son of Malkah, witness
 Eleazar son of Hananah, witness

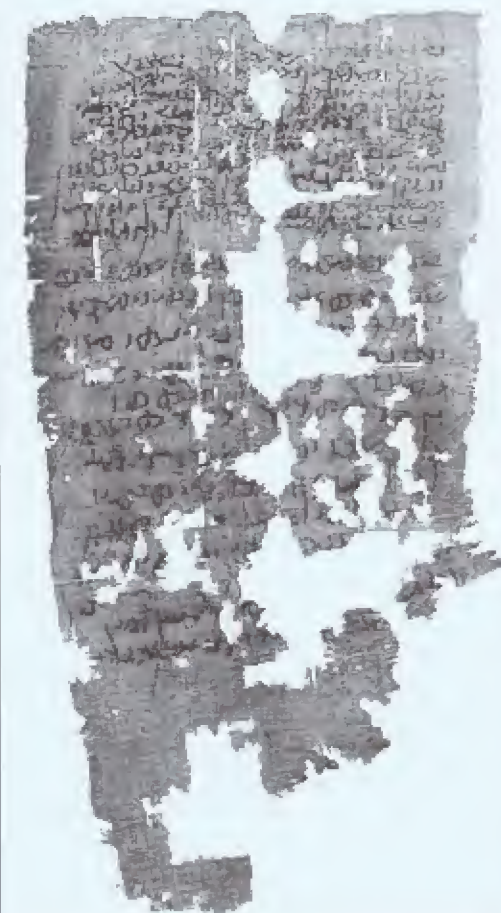


Photo courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum

(*kol ha-* or *kol she-*, anyone or everyone who...), so typical of rabbinic sayings. Compare, for example, these sayings from the Mishnah: "Anyone who delves into four things—What is above; What is below; What was formerly; What will be hereafter—it were better for him if he had not come into the world" (Hagigah 2:1); "Anyone who forgets one word of what he has learned is worthy of death" (Avot 3:9); "Anyone who profanes the name of Heaven in secret will be requited openly" (Avot 4:4); "Anyone who honors the Torah is himself honored by others" (Avot 4:6); and "Anyone who fulfills the Torah in poverty will in the end fulfill it in wealth" (Avot 4:9).

The *pas ha* construction is as frequent in the gospels as in rabbinic literature. For example: Mt. 5:22 ("anyone who is angry with his brother"); Mt. 5:28 ("anyone who looks at a woman lustfully"); Mt. 7:26 ("everyone who hears these words of mine"); Lk. 14:11 ("everyone who exalts himself will be humbled"); and Lk. 20:18 ("everyone who falls on that stone").

Notice that πῶς ὁ ἀπολύων (*pas ho apolyōn*, anyone

divorcing, anyone who divorces), is a Matthean-Lukan minor agreement against Mark (Mt. 5:32a; Mk. 10:11; Lk. 16:18a). Mark gives "ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ (*hos an apolysē*, whoever divorces).

8. For examples of the expression *VEN EN SHEN* (*ha-me-ga-RESH 'et 'ish-TO...*, the [man] who divorces his wife...), see Mishnah, Gittin 8:9 and 9:1.

9. This example was called to my attention by Joseph Frankovic.

10. The phrase **דבר רע** (*de-var 'er-var*, a thing of indecency) occurs a second time in the Mishnah, in Yevamot 3:5.

11. Joseph Frankovic pointed out to me that Saul Lieberman has suggested a possible reason for Rabbi Akiva's stance. In Lieberman's comment on *Tosefta, Sotah 5:10* ("[A man who marries an unsuitable woman not only violates five commandments,] but also causes propagation and procreation to cease from the earth"), he explains:

(continued on page 35)

GERGESA:

Site of the Demoniac's Healing

by Mendel Nun



MENDEL NUN



The recent discovery of many of the ancient harbors that ringed the Sea of Galilee is an exciting chapter in Sea of Galilee research. One of these harbors is located at Kursi, ancient Gergesa (see map, p. 24). In this article, Mendel Nun contends that the demoniac's healing and the miracle of the swine took place at Gergesa, not Gadara or Gerasa.

One of the miracles performed by Jesus during his stay with the Sea of Galilee fishermen is known in Christian tradition as the "Healing of the Demon-possessed Man," and also, more popularly, as the "Miracle of the Swine" (Mt. 8:28-34; Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39). The story actually begins at Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus lived for a time at the house of Jonah the fisherman and his sons, Simon Peter and Andrew.

One day Jesus wished to get away from the crowds that were surrounding him. It was winter, the season when fishermen, then as now, took their boats to sea in the afternoon, to the sardine fishing grounds near Gergesa, about eight kilometers across the water from Capernaum. Jesus went down to the harbor at Capernaum and entered the boat of one of his disciples. He sailed with his disciples "over to the other side."

On this particular winter day, Jesus performed not one, but two miracles. The first had to do with the weather: his boat and the other boats that set out for the fishing grounds were suddenly struck by a great storm, and "waves beat into the boat" (Mk. 4:37). Such sudden storms are typical of the Sea of Galilee in win-

ter. The frightened disciples clustered around their master, who happened to be sleeping peacefully in the stern of the boat. They woke him and asked fearfully, "Master, don't you care if we die?"

So Jesus rose and "rebuked" the wind and told it to be calm, and the storm stopped. Then he rebuked his disciples: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" And the boat came safely to the other side.

As Jesus got out of the boat and stepped ashore, a man approached him who was clearly what today we would call psychotic. In the manner of the time, he claimed that "a legion of devils" lived inside him. "possessed" him, and he begged Jesus to cure him.

Jesus agreed to drive out the devils, and sent them into a herd of swine that happened to be feeding on a nearby hill. The suddenly crazed swine ran violently down a ridge and jumped off a precipice into the Sea of Galilee, where they drowned.

Site of the Miracle

Where did this miracle take place? There are three candidates. The best manuscript of the synoptic gospels, Codex Vaticanus, reads "the land of the Gerasenes" in Mark and Luke's

Page 18:

Remains of the Kursi harbor's breakwater were completely exposed in the 1989-1991 drought (view to the south). In the distance, behind the grove of trees on the shore, can be seen the precipice from which, according to tradition, the swine plunged into the lake.

Page 19:

The author atop one of the stones that created the Kursi harbor's massive breakwater.

Below:

The steep slopes (foreground) down which the swine may have rushed (view to the north). To appreciate the incline's steepness, see page 22, upper right photo.



accounts of the miracle, and "the land of the Gadarenes" in Matthew's; however, there is also good manuscript evidence for a third site: "the land of the Gergesenes." Therefore, did the miracle take place near Gergesa, known today as Kursi, on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee; or did it take place in the region of the Greek city of Gadara, south of the Sea of Galilee, where an Arab village known as Um Keis later occupied the site; or did it occur even further south, near the Greek city of Gerasa?

The Jerusalem Talmud, redacted in Tiberias on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee, provides a clue. It connects the area around Susita-Hippos, near Kursi, with the Gergashites, one of the seven Canaanite nations at the time of the Israelite conquest.

Another ancient name with a similar sound is connected with the Susita region, namely, the Geshurites, who lived in an Aramaic kingdom that existed in King David's time east of the lake. The Septuagint gives "Gergesites" for "Geshurites" (Josh. 12:5). The Midrash, too, refers to "Gergeshta [the Aramaic equivalent of Gergesa], on the eastern side of Lake Tiberias." According to the Midrash, in the future, when Gog, the hostile force from the land of Magog, invades Israel and is defeated in an apocalyptic war, God will point to the graves of Gog, which will extend from Jerusalem to Gergeshta.



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All this seems to indicate that, of the three names, Gergesa is the most accurate and most firmly rooted in geography and tradition, and that the plain of Kursi is in fact the land of the Gergesenes, or part of it.

Already in the third century, the early church father Origen reached the conclusion that the names Gadara and Gerasa are suspect. He uses the name Gergesa in describing an ancient town close to the lake where there was a precipice near the shore. This, Origen says, was the place where the demons drove the swine into the lake. The name Gergesa, he adds, was prophetic, in that the Hebrew word *garesh* means "to drive out"; and indeed, the residents of this town did drive out Jesus. No other church father has provided a clearer geographical designation.

How did the names Gerasa and Gadara enter the gospel accounts? In the opinion of the renowned scholar Gustaf Dalman (*Sacred Sites and Ways*, p. 178), it may be assumed that the name Gerasa was employed by a gospel writer who was unfamiliar with the geography of the region. The name Gergesa sounded strange to him; therefore, he "corrected" it, substituting a similar sounding and familiar name—Gerasa, the name of a well-known Greek city east of the Jordan. Then, Dalman suggests, another gospel writer who was more familiar with the local geography, in an attempt to correct the error, substituted Gadara, the name of a Greek city located above the Yarmuk River on a ridge southeast of the lake.

There is a certain geographic basis for the name Gadara, since the city's domain extended to the southeastern shore of the lake (see my forthcoming *The "Land of the Gadarenes": New Light on an Old Sea of Galilee Puzzle*).

Above:

Small stone anchors and fishing net weights that were found on the lake-shore a few hundred meters south of Kursi harbor moments before they were photographed. Twine and small screwdrivers mark the holes in the stones.

Left below:

A stone threshold lying on its side, a remnant of the public building that, perhaps, was the synagogue of Kursi. At one end of this basalt threshold is a socket (marked by an inserted reed; at upper right). Originally, a door-hinge rested in the socket.



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Right:
The steep slope of the "precipice," swept bare by a recent fire (view west across the lake).

Below:
An ancient fishing net weight at the spot on the Kursi beach where it has just been found.



Below:
Ruins (interior) of the holding tank for live fish.

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Above:
The beautiful Valley of Kursi (view to the north), probably the "land of the Gergesenes" (Lk. 8:26).



Left:
The author standing on the ruins of the quay (fish market) at Kursi.

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This latter gospel writer, however, did not know the fishing and sailing habits of Sea of Galilee fishermen; consequently, he, too, erred. The boat of Jesus' disciples was on its way, together with other fishing boats from Capernaum, to the sardine fishing grounds of Kursi, where, in winter, work starts shortly before sunset. Gergesa (Kursi) is across the lake from Capernaum, a distance of only eight kilometers; but the district of Gadara is not "across to the other side" (Mk. 4:35; Lk. 8:22), rather it is at the other, or southern, end of the lake, a distance of over sixteen kilometers from Capernaum. Fishermen, cautious by nature, were not in the habit of sailing such distances, particularly in the dangerous winter season.

Map of the Sea of Galilee's ancient harbors. Sixteen harbors have recently been discovered, thirteen of them by the author.



The Land of the Gergesenes

On the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, five kilometers north of Kibbutz Ein Gev, a small peninsula extends into the lake. At this point, roughly parallel to the shore, there is a small valley three kilometers long and about one-half kilometer wide. The valley continues into the lake forming a wide shoal. This shoal is, and has always been, the best sardine fishing grounds in the lake.

The valley and its shoal make up the delta of a stream that descends from the Golan Heights. The canyon formed by the stream is known in Arabic as Wadi Samak, meaning "Canyon of Fish." The name may indeed be very ancient, for the word "samak" means fish in Aramaic and Ugaritic.

The Valley of Kursi—the "land of the Gergesenes" in the New Testament—with its abundant water supply, fertile land, and fishing grounds, has been inhabited since time immemorial. The mouth of the Samak Canyon is unique—wide, rectangular, steep, and closed at the back, to the east. It looks like a giant armchair, which is probably the origin of its name: *Kursi* (variant, *Kursa*) means armchair in Semitic languages.

Kursi in Jewish Sources

A settlement named Kursi, or Kursa, is mentioned several times in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, but with no clues as to the site's location. According to one of these talmudic traditions, the pagan temple of Nebo occupied a site named Kursi (Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 11^b); but there is no indication whether the temple was in the land of Israel or in Babylon. The Jerusalem Talmud mentions the burial, by residents of Kursa, of a man from a nearby village (Moed Katan 82^c, chpt. 3, halachah 5). The Jerusalem Talmud also mentions a second-century C.E. sage named Ya'akov ben Korshai, that is, Jacob of Korsha or Kurs(h)a (Shabbat 12^c, chpt. 10, halachah 5; Pesahim 37^b, chpt. 10, halachah 1).

At the close of the Second Temple period, Gergesa was part of the territory of the Greek city of Hippos, and its name does not appear in the list of villages that had purely Jewish population and were required to pay taxes and donations to the temple in Jerusalem. On the other hand, Avanish, a neighboring village on the southern bank of the Samak, does appear in the list. From this evidence and the gospel story of the Gergesene demoniac, it may be

assumed that non-Jews as well as Jews lived in Gergesa.

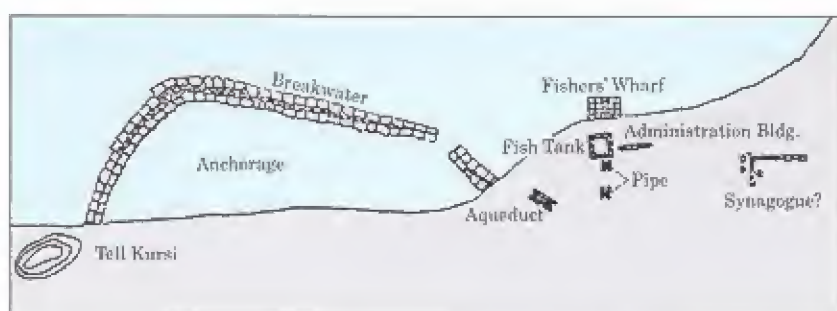
The Fishing Harbor

After the Six Day War in 1967, remains of a Jewish settlement from the Roman-Byzantine period began to come to light. In 1970, archaeologists carried out an underwater survey along the lake's coast near Tel Kursi. The divers discovered the foundations of an anchorage. These, no doubt, are the ruins of the ancient harbor of Gergesa.

The remains of this harbor can be seen from the shore during most months of the year—provided one knows what to look for. A breakwater, encircling an area of 1500 square meters, juts out from the shore, curves slightly for 150 meters and rejoins the shore. The harbor is one hundred meters long, with a maximum width of twenty-five meters. The entrance was at the northern, calmer side. As it leaves the shore, the breakwater is four meters wide, and five to six meters wide further out, as protection against storms from the south and west. The workmanship of the breakwater is excellent: the layers of basalt boulders have chiseled outer surfaces.

The harbor is the heart of a complex of facilities that made up a fishing village. North of the anchorage, the remains of a plastered rectangular storage tank, three by three and a half meters, can be distinguished. (Though originally built on the shore, well out of danger from high waves, the tank is now partially submerged because the lake's level has been raised nearly a meter by modern engineers.) The tank was used to store fish brought in several times a day by dragnet hauls. A supply of fresh running water made it possible to keep the catch alive for several days. This ancient method is more sophisticated than recent methods: until the 1950s fishermen had to drag their catch behind their boats in wooden cages. The tank received its water not from the lake, but via an aqueduct that carried water in special terra-cotta pipe from the Samak stream. The rectangular foundations of a quay (eight by five meters) can be seen between the tank and the lake. Here fishermen unloaded their catch and bargained with the fishmongers.

Foundations of a large building with a mosaic floor were found to the north of the tank. More than a hundred lead dragnet sinkers were found in proximity to the building, connecting their use to the time the building functioned, perhaps as the harbor and fish market's administrative center. Pottery unearthed from silt covering the inside of the harbor dates to the



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Roman-Byzantine period. Remains of the settlement, which flourished here from before the Arab conquest, are dispersed for about half a kilometer along the shore. At a later period, the settlement was limited to the tell itself, which grew to a height of six meters and covered an area of three acres. Remains of a Roman road leading from the main road to the settlement were found by the author in 1975.

At the northern end of the site, wave action has exposed part of a large building containing two layers of a colored mosaic floor. The building is surrounded by broken columns and marble fragments. This is apparently the synagogue of Kursi, "the synagogue of Jonadab son of Rechab in Kursia above the Lake of Tiberias," which is mentioned in an eleventh-century list of holy sites for Jewish pilgrims, a kind of pilgrim's guidebook.

The discovery of Kursi's harbor paved the way for surveys of other ancient harbors surrounding the lake. To date, sixteen such harbors have been discovered.

JP

"This article has been excerpted and abridged from Mendel Nun's *Gergesa (Kursi): Site of a Miracle Church & Fishing Village* (Kibbutz Ein Gev: Kinnereth Sailing Co., 1989), and his forthcoming *The "Land of the Gadarenes": New Light on an Old Sea of Galilee Puzzle*.

The following publications in Mendel Nun's Sea of Galilee series may be ordered from JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, P.O. Box 31820, 91317 Jerusalem, Israel: The Sea of Galilee and Its Fishermen in the New Testament (64 pp., 82 illustrations; \$7.00 or £4.00); The Sea of Galilee: Newly Discovered Harbours from New Testament Days (31 pp., 48 illustrations; \$5.00 or £3.00); Gergesa (Kursi): Site of a Miracle Church & Fishing Village (32 pp., 39 illustrations; \$5.00 or £3.00); The Sea of Galilee: Water Levels, Past and Present (24 pp., 26 illustrations; \$5.00 or £3.00); and Ancient Stone Anchors and Net Sinkers from the Sea of Galilee (64 pp., 125 illustrations; \$7.00 or £4.00). Prices include shipping (by surface mail). Allow 8-10 weeks for delivery. Add \$1.50 or £1.00 per item for air-mail shipment.

STEWARDS OF GOD'S KEYS

by Joseph Frankovic

Jesus gave his disciple Peter the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” and promised that whatever Peter “bound” and “loosed” on earth would be “bound” and “loosed” in heaven. What scriptural allusions lurk beneath these expressions and what are their implications? How does the Jewish literary background of Matthew 16:19 help us better appreciate Jesus’ words?

Pirke Avot, also known as The Sayings of the Fathers, or, simply Avot, is unquestionably one of the most valuable rabbinic texts for comparative study with the synoptic gospels.¹ Spanning time from the emergence of Hellenism in ancient Israel through the first two centuries of the Christian era, Avot is a collection of maxims to which some sixty sages and rabbis have contributed.² The deceptively simple sayings of Avot carry potent theological and ethical implications that have been driven firmly and purposely into the consciousness of Judaism.³ Moreover, the theology and ethic, and the language and imagery through which they are communicated, stem directly from the conceptual world of the biblical text. This has motivated individuals like the Gaon of Vilna, an eighteenth-century A.D. rabbi-scholar, and others, to demonstrate how the sayings of Avot have their origin, or parallel, in Scripture.⁴

Scripture Lurks Beneath

The ubiquitous presence of Scripture lurking beneath the maxims of Avot may be visualized as a massive iceberg bobbing in an Arctic sea, breaking the water's surface at some points, but with the bulk of its mass remaining just below. The most obvious way Scripture penetrates the surface of the text is when a Bible verse is quoted as a proof. For example, in response to a question concerning what is the evil way from which a man should distance himself, Rabbi Shim'on said, "The one who borrows but does not repay, because the one who borrows from man is like one who borrows from God, which agrees with what is written in Scripture: 'The

wicked borrows but does not repay, whereas the righteous is compassionate and gives."⁵

In most cases, however, the scriptural connection is not explicitly stated and requires some effort to identify. For example, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah told the following parable:

Every person whose learning exceeds his or her deeds, what does this person resemble? A tree whose branches are dense but roots are sparse. A wind comes, and uprooting the tree, turns it upside down. But every person whose deeds exceed his or her learning, what does this person resemble? A tree whose branches are sparse but roots are dense. Even if every type of wind were to come against this tree, it would not move the tree from its place.⁶

The imagery of this parable is reminiscent of Jeremiah 17:6, 8, and in some manuscripts these verses have been appended to the parable.⁷

Doubled Allusions

A more sophisticated example of how Scripture lurks beneath a maxim occurs when a sage alludes not to a single verse, but to a pair of verses. Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi once said, "Be as mindful of a light commandment as of a weighty commandment, for you do not know the reward of each commandment."⁸ Rabbi Yehudah has tapped into a complex of ideas generated by the bringing together of Deuteronomy 5:16, a weighty commandment from the Decalogue carrying a promise of prosperity, and Deuteronomy 22:7, a light com-



mandment carrying the same promise. The hermeneutic that enabled these verses to be juxtaposed operates on a concordance-like principle. The phrase *לֵאמֹן יִיטַב לָךְ* (*le-MA'-an YI-tav lak*, so that it may go well with you) and the idea of lengthened days appear in both verses.⁹ This method of joining verses and interpreting them in light of one another was popular among ancient Jewish sages, and very much second nature, because, when memorizing the Bible, they not only memorized according to its natural progression, but atomized and recombined Scripture from disparate contexts on the basis of hermeneutic principles or already existing traditions. This way of memorizing could be compared to a child who, after learning the alphabet, decides to memorize it repeatedly backwards, inverted, and in various other ways, one of which may include A, Z, B, Y, C, X, etc. When a sage links a verse from the Torah to another from the Prophets, and both of these to another from the third section of the Jewish canon, the Writings,¹⁰ the process is called *הַרְצָה* (*ha-ri-ZAH*, stringing).

Atomizing and Recombining Scripture

What has been discussed so far in reference to Avot, namely, the explicit quoting of Scripture, the making of allusions to Scripture, and the atomizing and recombining of Scripture, is equally applicable to the synoptic gospels. Like in the rabbinic maxims, Jesus occasionally quoted verses straight from the Bible. For example, in Matthew 11:10, Jesus applied Malachi 3:1 to John the Baptist. More common, however, are allusions or hints at verses of Scripture. A fine example of this technique is Matthew 11:12, where Jesus described the kingdom of heaven as “breaking forth.”¹¹ “Breaking forth” is an allusion to Micah 2:13. In this passage the one who breaks forth, *הַפֹּרֵץ* (*ha-po-RETS*), suddenly appears. Jewish tradition regards the title *ha-po-RETS* as a code-like word for a complex of ideas dealing with the Messiah.¹²

Instances of individuals hinting at Scripture abound in the synoptic tradition, but fewer are the places where a modern reader can catch a glimpse of Jesus or others combining verses based on a common word.¹³ Whether the combining is an example from rabbinic literature or the synoptic gospels, the hermeneutic principle is the same, an associative or concordance-like linking of verses on the basis of common phraseology or even merely vocabu-

lary. The method is reflected in a rabbinic form of interpretation, applied to legal sections of the Torah, called *gezerah shavah*.¹⁴ The aim of this article is to demonstrate that the words Jesus spoke to Peter regarding the keys of the kingdom of heaven should be viewed as an example of this associative thought process that so easily separates and recombines Scripture.

Keys and Kingdom

In Matthew 16:19 one reads the following: I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.¹⁵

The verse readily divides into two parts. The first part (19a) is about the giving of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the second part (19b) speaks about binding and loosing. For the sake of mounting a case in clear, logical increments, discussion will focus first on 19b.

It is widely recognized in both academic¹⁶ and popular¹⁷ commentaries that the language of 19b resembles that of Isaiah 22:22. The presence of the word “keys” in 19a also strengthens the association with Isaiah 22:22.

Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder; when he opens no one will shut, when he shuts no one will open. And I will drive him like a peg in a firm place....¹⁸

From a rabbinic interpretation of 2 Kings 24:16 found in Sifre Deuteronomy,¹⁹ one learns that Isaiah 22:22 had been absorbed into a complex of material dealing with the teaching and learning of Torah:

“...the craftsmen and the smiths.” *Veheh-rash* [and the craftsmen], when he [i.e., the teacher] speaks everyone remains silent. *Vehamasger* [and the locksmith], he opens one topic of instruction and closes another to establish that which is written in Scripture, “He opens and no one closes; he closes and no one opens.”²⁰

Kingdom Authority

It is possible that the expression “binding and loosing” in 19b is distantly related to this complex to which Isaiah 22:22 and Sifre Deuteronomy’s exposition on 2 Kings 24:16 belong. Scholars have spent much ink trying to pinpoint the meaning of Jesus’ words in 19b. Despite all efforts, the exact meaning remains very elusive. Let it be said, however, that Jesus

bestowed on Peter an authority to be exercised within and on behalf of the community of believers that would emerge fully after Jesus' resurrection.

Peter's designation as steward of the kingdom's keys may have broad-based implications. He may have been invested, on the one hand, with the responsibility to ensure that Jesus' unique teaching of Torah was properly applied among those constituting this new redemptive movement,²¹ which Jesus called the kingdom of heaven, and, on the other, with the authority to move God to redemptive action,²² which Jesus also spoke of in terms of the kingdom of heaven. In either or both cases, within the parameters of meaning allowed by the term kingdom of heaven in the synoptic gospels, God would be promising to establish what a righteous person, namely Peter, decrees.

Kingdom Responsibility

Returning to 19a, one reads, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." The bundle of keys that were given to Peter are those that a steward would carry. They are symbols of responsibilities delegated to a reliable party.²³ In the Babylonian Talmud a story is told about priests to whom keys were entrusted. The tale is introduced with *ta-NU ra-ba-NAN*, our teachers taught), which indicates its earlier origins.²⁴

Our rabbis taught: "At the time of the destruction of the first temple, groups of young priests gathered together with the keys of the temple in their hands. They ascended to the roof of the temple and said before God: 'Master of the Universe! Since we have failed at being faithful stewards, let these keys be given back to you!' They threw them toward heaven, and something like the form of a hand received the keys from them. Then, throwing themselves from the roof, they fell into the fire below. Concerning them the Prophet Isaiah lamented: 'The oracle of the Valley of Vision; What is your problem now, that all of you have ascended to the roofs? You who were full of noise, a boisterous town, a jubilant city. Your slain were not slain with the sword, nor were they casualties of war.'"²⁵

This story supplies two important bits of information. One is that the keys to the temple had a supernatural character. Belonging to God, the keys were entrusted by him to the priests, and, therefore, after publicly confessing their failure as stewards, the priests returned the keys to their owner. The other is that the



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stewards of the keys were required to be faithful or reliable.

Another version of this story appears in 2 Baruch 10:18, which like Isaiah 22:22 is cited by commentators on Matthew 16:19.²⁶ The text in 2 Baruch reads as follows:

You priests, take the keys of the sanctuary, and throw them up to heaven above, and give them to the Lord and say, "Guard your house yourself, for we have been found to be false stewards!"²⁷

2 Baruch is believed to have been written in the land of Israel about 110 A.D. by a Jewish author.²⁸ This version differs significantly in two ways from that found in the Babylonian Talmud. One difference is that no mention is made of the priests throwing themselves from the temple roof. The second difference is that no proof text has been appended to the story. In the Talmud's version the proof is Isaiah 22:1–2, which demands the detail of the suicidal action of the priests. When one reads the story in 2 Baruch, the emphasis is on the failure of the priests as faithful stewards. The tacking on of Isaiah 22:1–2 suggests that by the time the story was retold in the Talmud, it had assumed a literary function that deviated from its first telling. The story's added features, namely, the death jump of the priests, and the tying of this new element to Isaiah 22:1–2, are indicative of a later stage in development. Therefore, the version in 2 Baruch almost certainly represents the earlier form.

Faithful Stewards and Their Keys

Now the question should be asked: What passage of Scripture inspired the earlier, more original form of the story found in 2 Baruch? The leading candidate is 1 Chronicles 9:26–27:

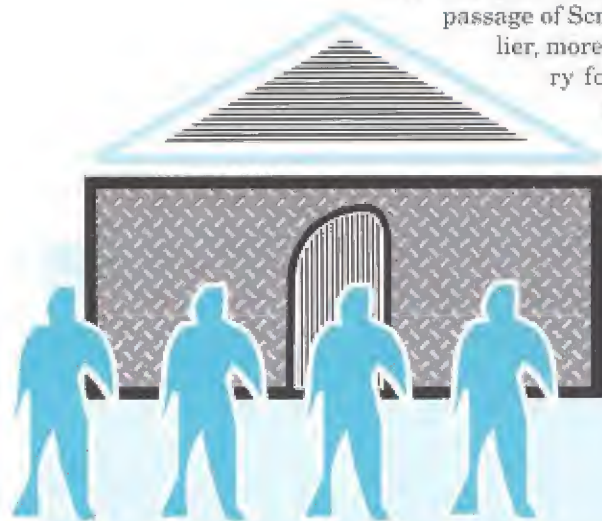
The four chief gatekeepers, who were Levites, were in an office of trust, and were responsible for the chambers and the treasuries of the temple. They spent the night in the temple precincts, because they were responsible for guarding them; and they were in charge of opening the temple's gates [lit., in charge of the keys] every morning.

C. F. Keil commented on בֵּית־עֹמֶן, (*be-'e-mu-NAH*, "in good faith," or what is translated above, "in an office of trust") that these Levites "had been recognized to be faithful."²⁹ Thus, this passage contains the two elements that would be necessary to generate the story found in 2 Baruch: the idea that the priests were "faithful" stewards, and the idea that they were responsible for the keys of the temple. Note that the biblical text does not state who entrusted the keys to the priests; however, the story in 2 Baruch implies that God was the giver.

In New Testament commentaries that make an effort to include discussion of rabbinic sources, one often finds Isaiah 22:22 and 2 Baruch 10:18 or Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 29^a listed as relevant parallels to Matthew 16:19. The question that must be asked is, how do Isaiah 22:22 and the tale in 2 Baruch 10:18 fit together? If the story of the irresponsible priests was spawned by 1 Chronicles 9:26–27, then this question may be answered easily. The link is the Hebrew word מַפתֵּחַ (*maf-TE-ah*, key). Moreover, Targum Jonathan renders the Hebrew מַפתֵּחַ בֵּית דָּוִד (*maf-TE-ah bet da-VID*, the key[s] of the house of David) of Isaiah 22:22 into Aramaic as מַפתֵּחַ בֵּית מִקְדָּשָׁא (*maf-TE-ah bet mik-de-SHA*, the key[s] of the temple).³⁰ This means that in the world of Jewish exegesis Isaiah 22:22 and 1 Chronicles 9:27 are speaking of the same key(s).³¹ Though Targum Jonathan is not a particularly early text in regard to the date when it was revised and edited into its current form—what scholars call the final date of redaction—it does contain, according to Bruce Chilton, two strata belonging to the tannaic period and one to the amoraic period.³² He further suggests that the Aramaic rendering of Isaiah 22 may have its origins in material stemming from the period before the temple's demise in 70 A.D.³³

Tangible Images from Daily Life

Ancient Jewish sages like Jesus and the contributors to Avot were concrete thinkers. Their sayings are laced with tangible images drawn from daily life in order to facilitate comprehension. For example, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai used to say, "If all the sages of Israel



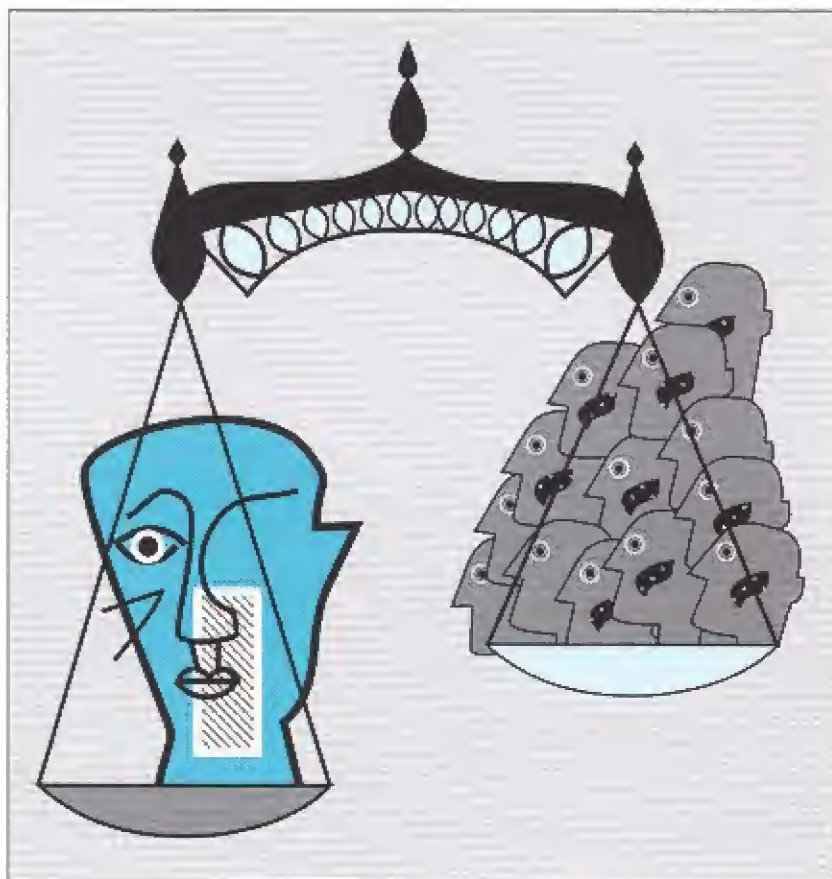
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were on one side of a pair of scales and Eliezer ben Hyrcanus on the other, he would outweigh them all."³⁴ The point of the saying is very clear: As a sage, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus is in a league by himself.

It is interesting that the *agoranomos*, or Roman official appointed to oversee the local marketplace, carried a set of standard weights to ensure fair business practices. These standard weights were, moreover, sometimes fashioned into bust-like representations of the *agoranomos* himself!³⁵ Thus, those who heard Yohanan ben Zakkai's saying probably saw in their mind's eye a pair of scales with a miniature chess-piece-like bust of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus on one side, and an array of similar busts on the other. This raises the question: What sort of realia from the Second Temple period might underlie Jesus' response to Peter? Perhaps it was the set of keys used by the priests to lock the gates at the *Neilah*, or closing ceremony, of the temple in the evening.³⁶ This blessing and dismissing of the people must have been a powerful image in many people's minds, and a main feature of that event was likely the shutting of the gates with big, special keys. These special keys would have served the same function in Jesus' day as the earlier set mentioned in 1 Chronicles 9:26–27.

Conclusion

What is gained by recognizing the allusion to Isaiah 22:22 and 1 Chronicles 9:26–27 in Jesus' words to Peter? Matthew 16:17–19 is one of the most Hebraic passages in terms of language, expression and thought to be found in the synoptic tradition. The expressions *בָּשָׂר וּדְמָם* (*ba-SAR va-DAM*), or "flesh and blood,"³⁷ and *אֵלֹהֵי אָבִי שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם* (*a-VI she-ba-sha-MA-yim*), or "my Father who is in heaven,"³⁸ are examples par excellence of mishnaic Hebrew idioms embedded in the Greek of the gospels. After using these Hebrew idioms, Jesus makes a wordplay with Peter's name, *פֶּטְרוֹס* (*petros*), and the word *פֶּטְרָא* (*petra*).³⁹ The wordplay is apparently the earliest known expression of a tradition that appears in a late rabbinic text about God's searching for a reliable individual upon whom he can build.⁴⁰ In the midrash, that individual is Abraham; but for Jesus, it is Peter. The motif of reliability is carried into verse 19 with the words "keys of the kingdom." From 1 Chronicles 9:26–27 and the tale in 2 Baruch 10:18 one learns that God's keys are given only to responsible, reliable parties. Because Peter is "solid" as rock, he is deemed worthy to be steward over the keys of the kingdom of heav-



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en. Like the faithful Levitical priests, to whom God entrusted the keys of the temple, Peter now has been entrusted with the keys of the kingdom. With these keys comes authority. That authority, expressed through the Hebrew idioms "binding" and "loosing," or in plain English, "prohibiting" and "sanctioning," is backed by God.

Jesus' words in Matthew 16:19 are another remarkable example of ancient Jewish exegesis preserved in the synoptic tradition. Without a second thought, Jesus answered Peter with biblically saturated language. His words contained an allusion to a complex of ideas to which Isaiah 22:22 and 1 Chronicles 9:26–27 belonged. A central motif of the complex is that God's keys are entrusted only to solid, trustworthy individuals. This same motif is also at the heart of Jesus' wordplay in Matthew 16:18. And like all ancient Jewish sages, when teaching Jesus relied heavily on tangible images from daily life. Indeed, Peter and Jesus' other disciples were familiar with keys, but the keys of the kingdom were not a metaphorical image merely based on ordinary house keys.⁴¹ Rather, the imagery derives its richness from the supernatural keys described in 2 Baruch 10:18 and perhaps from their later counterparts employed at the *Neilah* ceremony in the first century.

Though the expression “keys of the kingdom of heaven” remains difficult to interpret, familiarity with ancient Jewish exegesis allows us to enjoy the subtler aspects of Jesus’ words and move one step closer toward unlocking their precise meaning. JP

1. Note that the last chapter of Avot, chapter 6, known as “Acquisition of the Torah,” is a later addition. See Hanoch Albeck’s comments to Order Nezikin in *The Mishnah* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, and Tel Aviv: Dvir Co., 1988), pp. 351, 381.

2. *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Joseph H. Hertz, rev. ed. (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1948), p. 610.

3. Modern western thinking tends to neglect the fact that ancient Judaism relied upon parables, proverbs, maxims, songs, poetry, prayers, stories and legends to transmit its theology. Regarding the last of these, A. Marmorstein wrote, “Legends were more powerful allies of the theologians and teachers, apologists and preachers, than generally thought of” (“The Unity of God in Rabbinic Literature,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 1 [1924], p. 469). Also compare Murray Salisbury, “Hebrew Proverbs and How to Translate Them,” in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. Robert Bergen (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994), p. 434. Moreover, in time Avot was incorporated into the Jewish prayer book and became the prescribed text for reading on Sabbath afternoons. The theological influence of the Jewish prayer book on Jewish thinking has been and continues to be far-reaching. Regarding its influence, Jakob Petuchowski wrote, “By the side of its technical theological tracts, Judaism has had its prayer book—next to the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Psalms, practically the only ‘theological’ *vade mecum* which many Jews, throughout the centuries have had at their immediate disposal” (“Theology and Poetry in the Liturgy of the Synagogue,” in *Standing before God: Studies on Prayer in Scriptures and Tradition with Essays*, eds. A. Finkel and L. Frizzell [New York: Ktav, 1981], p. 225). On the parables of Jesus and their theological implications, see Brad H. Young’s two books: *Jesus and His Jewish Parables: Rediscovering the Roots of Jesus’ Teaching* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), and *Jesus the Jewish Theologian* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995).

4. *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, ed. Hertz, p. 610.

5. Avot 2:9 (ms. Kaufmann, p. 339). For an English translation, see *The Mishnah*, trans. Herbert Danby (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 449. The proof text is Ps. 37:21.

6. Avot 3:17 (ms. Kaufmann, p. 342). Note that the author has incorporated the corrections found in the text and margins of the manuscript into this English translation.

7. Cf. Avot 3:17 (ed. Albeck, p. 368) and Danby’s English translation, especially note 8, *The Mishnah*, p. 452. For an additional example of an allusion to Scripture, compare Avot 3:16 and Eccl. 9:12, and see

Albeck’s comment to מְפֹרֵשׁ מְפֹרֵשׁ (*u-me-tsu-DAH fe-ru-SAH*, and a seine is spread), p. 367.

8. Avot 2:1 (Ms. Kaufmann, p. 338). Cf. also Albeck, p. 357, and Danby, p. 447.

9. Cf. Exod. 20:12. Also note that in Mt. 5:19 Jesus alludes to this same complex.

10. See the story about Rabbi Shim’on ben Azzai, and after it, Rabbi Levi’s stringing of Lev. 13:45. 2 Kgs. 8:5 and Ps. 50:16 (Leviticus Rabbah 16:4 [ed. Margulies, pp. 354–355]). For an English translation of this story and Rabbi Levi’s “stringing,” see *Midrash Rabbah*, eds. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino Press, 1939), 4:205–206. Rabbi Shim’on ben Azzai flourished early in the second century A.D., and Rabbi Levi late in the third century A.D. Also see מְפֹרֵשׁ, definition no. 2 in Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (repr. New York: Jastrow Publishers, 1967), p. 500. An example of מְפֹרֵשׁ (*ha-ri-ZAH*, stringing) is found in Lk. 9:35 in the Transfiguration story. The voice from the cloud strings together (in reverse order!) a phrase from the Torah (Deut. 18:15), a phrase from the Prophets (Isa. 42:1) and a phrase from the Writings (Ps. 2:7).

11. Underneath the Greek ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται (*ē basileia tōn ouranōn biazetai*) is likely the Hebrew מַלְכֻת שָׁמַיִם מְפֹרֵשֶׁת (*mal-KUT sha-MA-yim po-RE-tset*, the kingdom of heaven is bursting forth). Cf. Mt. 11:12 in the New International Version, which translates this phrase as “the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing.” See David Flusser, *Jesus in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1968), pp. 40, 87. See also Robert L. Lindsey, “The Kingdom of God: God’s Power Among Believers,” *Jerusalem Perspective* 24 (1990), 6–8. Cf. David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (New York: Arno Press, 1973; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, no date), pp. 286–287.

David Flusser was the first to recognize that the deponent Greek verb βιάζεται (*biazetai*) should be translated with an active instead of passive meaning, and that its Hebrew equivalent is מְפֹרֵשֶׁת (*po-RE-tset*). For an explanation of deponent verbs, see James Allen Hewett, *New Testament Greek: A Beginning and Intermediate Grammar* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986), p. 88.

12. The eminent Hebraist Edward Pococke commented regarding Mic. 2:13 that it is easy to apply to John the title *ha-po-RETS* (the “one who breaks open the way”) and by doing so “we have in the words, a most illustrious prophecy of Christ, and his forerunner John the Baptist” (*A Commentary on the Prophecy of Micah* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1676], p. 24). In 1988, an Oral Roberts University student, David Hill, rediscovered Pococke’s comment on Mic. 2:13.

Arriving independently at a conclusion similar to Pococke’s, David Flusser based his inference on the following rabbinic sources:

a. Rabbi David Kimhi’s comment on מְפֹרֵשׁ הַפֶּתַח (*a-LAH ha-po-RETS*, the breaker will go up) in Micah 2:13. Kimhi comments, מְפֹרֵשׁ הַפֶּתַח הוּא אֵלִיָּה, מְפֹרֵשׁ הוּא אֵלִיָּה, that is, “In the words of the sages and in midrash, ‘the breaker’ is Elijah, ‘their king’ is ‘Branch,’ the son of David.”

b. Pesikta Rabbati 35, to Zech. 2:14 (ed. M. Friedmann, p. 161^a):

Three days before the Messiah comes, Elijah will come...he will say to them [the people of Israel]: "Peace has come to the world...." On the second day, Elijah will come...and say: "Good has come to the world...." On the third day he will come and say, "Salvation has come to the world...." At that time, the Holy One, blessed be he, will show his glory and his kingdom to all the inhabitants of the world. He will redeem Israel, appearing at their head, as it is said, "The breaker goes up before them. They break out and pass through the gate, leaving by it. Their king passes through before them, the LORD at their head" (Mic. 2:13).

c. The comment on Mic. 2:13 found in *Metsudat David*:

The breaker goes up. Before they go up, the one who breaks through thorn fences and prickly hedges goes up before them in order to clear the way. Thus, it is said concerning the prophet Elijah that he will come before [God's] redemption to direct the hearts of Israel to their father who is in heaven, to be a gateway to that redemption, as it is said, "Behold I am sending the prophet Elijah...and he will turn the heart[s] of fathers...." (Mal. 4:5-6). *They break through.* Those returning from exile also will break through fences and hedges and pass through the breach as if it were a gate and a way by which they can leave the Exile, that is to say, they will have the courage to turn to God in repentance, and as a result, they will depart the Diaspora. *Their king passes on before them.* As they return their king will pass on before them. He is the King Messiah. He will march at the head of them all, for at that time he, too, will restore his Shechinah to Zion.

The comment of Rabbi David Kimhi (c. 1200 A.D.) and that of *Metsudat David*, a seventeenth-century commentary from Prague, may be found in *Mikraot Gedolot: Nevi'im Acharonim*, p. 317^b. My English translation of Pesikta Rabbati 35 can be compared with *Pesikta Rabbati*, trans. William Braude (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 2:675. Also note that Gen. 38:29 is part of the same complex. See *Genesis Rabbah* 85:14 (ed. Albeck, p. 1049; English trans.: Soncino ed., 2:799).

13. In Lk. 19:46 Jesus combines Isa. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11 because of the common word *be-Ti* (my house). Note that the Masoretic text of Jer. 7:11 reads *ha-BA-yit ha-ZEH*, this house); however, the Septuagint has *ὁ οἶκος μου* (*ho oikos mou*), which is equivalent to *be-Ti*. (See Joseph Frankovic, "Remember Shiloh!" *Jerusalem Perspective* 46 & 47 [1994], 24-29.) In Lk. 10:27 a lawyer combines Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18. The presence of *ve-a-hav-TA*, and you shall love) in both verses certainly helped in motivating this combination. In Lk. 22:69-70 Jesus and the chief priests and scribes have a sophisticated exchange of words. The priests and scribes in an instant link Jesus' allusion to Ps. 110 with Ps. 2 based on the common word *ye-li-de-Ti-ka*, I have given birth to you) that appears in Ps. 2:7 and Ps. 110:3. (Note the variant vocalization for the Masoretic *ye-li-de-Ti-ka*,

yal-du-TE-ka, your youth) preserved in the tradition of the Septuagint.) For a discussion of the variant vocalization, *ye-li-de-Ti-ka* for *yal-du-TE-ka* in Ps. 110:3, see David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), p. 192. Flusser is to be credited for recognizing the combining of Ps. 110:3 and 2:7 in Lk. 22:69-70 (cf. Robert L. Lindsey, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*, 2nd ed. [Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1973], p. xxi).

14. See Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, in *Greek in Jewish Palestine / Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1994), pp. 57-60. See also *ge-ze-RAH*, definition no. 4 in Jastrow's dictionary, p. 232.

15. Mt. 16:19, from the NASB. Incidentally, Professor Flusser views Mt. 16:17-19 as an authentic saying stemming from Jesus himself. He does, however, express reservations about the word *ekklesia* (*tekhlesia*, assembly; congregation; church) being original. See Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, note 5, p. 516.

16. Cf. Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1922-1960), 1:736.

17. Cf. the parallel verses listed in the *New American Standard Bible: The Open Bible Edition* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1979), p. 931.

18. Isa. 22:22-23a, from the NASB.

19. Sifre Deuteronomy is an early rabbinic commentary on Deuteronomy that is identified as stemming from the exegetical school of Rabbi Akiva. It belongs to a group of halachic midrashim that were compiled in the land of Israel sometime toward the end of the second century A.D.

20. Sifre Deuteronomy, Piska 321 (ed. Finkelstein, p. 370). For an English translation, see Reuven Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 332, 500, note 18.

21. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison have listed thirteen possible interpretations for 19b (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew, The International Critical Commentary* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991], 2:635-639). Note particularly "interpretation (X)." See also John Lightfoot's list of examples from rabbinic literature of the expressions *ti-SAR*, to tie, bind; forbid) and *hi-TIR*, to untie, loose; permit) (*A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989], 2:236-241). Cf. also Josephus' use of *desmeiv* (*desmein*) and *luen* (*LU-ein*), Septuagintal equivalents of *ti-SAR* and *hi-TIR* respectively, in describing the administrative power of the Pharisees (*The Jewish War* 1:111). Note, too, that Mal. 2:5-7 identifies the giving of instruction as one of the Levites' functions.

22. See Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 59^b, where Job 22:28 is interpreted as referring to the righteous, and Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 23^a, where the Sanhedrin sends a message to Honi the Circle Drawer. Cf. also Bava Metsi'a 85^a; Moed Katan 16^b; Shabbat 63^a; Tanhuma, *Tavo* 1 (ed. Wilna, p. 669). Note, too, the verse from the Lord's Prayer, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done" (Mt. 6:10); Jesus' remark to the

disciples in Lk. 10:18; and the Assumption of Moses 10:1, "Then his kingdom will appear throughout his whole creation. Then the devil will have an end. Yea, sorrow will be led away with him" (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1983], 1:931). The reference to the Assumption of Moses comes from Flusser, *Jesus*, p. 37. See Young, *Theologian*, p. 201.

23. Cf. Davies and Allison, p. 638, note 129, where Beare's comment is cited.

24. The phrase *ta-NU ra-ba-NAN* is a technical expression used in rabbinic literature. The root *na-n* (*t-n-h*) already appears in the Bible (Judg. 5:11). Cf. *na-n*, entry II, Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), p. 1072. Cf. also the more common biblical verb *na-n* (*sha-NAH*), entry III, *ibid.*, p. 1040. The roots *na-n* (*t-n-h*) and *na-n* (*sh-n-h*) carry the basic meaning of "to recite, repeat." In Mishnaic Hebrew the root *na-n* (*t-n-h*) assumed a more specialized meaning. Cf. the entry *na-n* in Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990), p. 585, and the entry *na-n* in Jastrow's dictionary, p. 1681.

A tanna was a person who committed to memory the text of the Mishnah and subsequently recited it in the academies. See Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, in *Greek in Jewish Palestine/Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, p. 88. Note that the root of the word Mishnah is *na-n* (*sh-n-h*) and the expression tannaic comes from the root *na-n* (*t-n-h*). The period of the Mishnah, or simply the tannaic period, begins with Hillel and closes with Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi, in other words, from the last third of the first century B.C. until approximately 230 A.D. When a tradition stemming from the tannaic period appears in a rabbinic text compiled in a later period, such as the Babylonian Talmud, the tradition is often introduced with *ta-NU ra-ba-NAN*, meaning literally, "our teachers repeated." See Aryeh Carmell, *Aiding Talmud Study* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1991), pp. 70–71.

25. Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 29^a. Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 19:6 (ed. Margulies, pp. 436–437).

26. See, for example, Strack and Billerbeck, p. 737.

27. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:624; and *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, ed. H. F. D. Sparks (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 846. Cf. also 4 Baruch 4:3–4.

28. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:617. Cf. also Sparks, p. 837.

29. C. F. Keil, *I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 3:166.

30. *The Bible in Aramaic*, ed. Alexander Sperber, (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 3:43. Cf. also Rashi on Isa. 22:22.

31. Note that the root *na-n* (*n-m-n*) appears in 1 Chron. 9:26 in the form of *na-n* (*ne-mu-NAH*, faithfulness) with regard to the Levites, and in Isa. 22:23 in the form of *na-n* (*ne-ne-MAN*, faithful) with regard to a firm or faithful place.

32. Bruce Chilton, *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels in Studies*, in *Judaism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), p. 72.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

34. Mishnah, Avot 2:8 (ed. Albeck, p. 360) and Danby's English translation, *The Mishnah*, p. 448.

35. Professor Burt Visotzky of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America made the suggestion in a classroom lecture that the bust-like representations of the *agoranomoi* may be the realia behind Avot 2:8. A lead anthropoid-shaped weight found in Gaza bears an inscription that reads, "Under the magistrature of Aurelios Bellicos Telemaque, *agoranomos*, Year 287." The date, "year 287," refers to the era of Gaza that began in 61 B.C. See Frederic Manns, *Some Weights of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods*, in *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, trans. Godfrey Kloetzli (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1984), pp. 14, 19, 25–29, but especially pp. 11–12.

36. Mishnah, Ta'anit 4:1 (ed. Albeck, p. 341) and Danby's English translation, *The Mishnah*, p. 199. Cf. Jastrow's dictionary, entry *na-n*, p. 919.

37. Cf. Mechilta, *Shirata* 1; to Exod. 15:1 [ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 118, line 14]; and Leviticus Rabbah 18:5 (ed. Margulies, pp. 410–412).

38. Cf. the similar expression, *na-n* (*she-ba-sha-MA-yim*, your [sgl.] father who is in heaven), in Avot 5:20 (ed. Albeck, p. 380) and Danby's English translation, *The Mishnah*, p. 458.

39. See David Bivin, "Matthew 16:18: The Petros-petra Wordplay—Greek, Aramaic, or Hebrew?" *Jerusalem Perspective* 46 & 47 (Sept.–Dec. 1994), 32–38; and George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 538.

40. The rabbinic text to which I refer is *Yalkut Shim'oni* to Num. 23:9, §766:

It can be compared to a king who desired to build a palace. He began digging, searching for solid rock on which he could lay foundations, but he found only mire. He dug in several other sites, always with the same results. However, the king did not give up. He dug in still another location. This time he struck solid rock [*petra*].

"Here," he said, "I will build," and he laid foundations and built.

In the same manner, the Holy One, blessed is he, before he created the world, sat and examined the generation of Enosh and the generation of the Flood.

"How can I create the world when those wicked people will appear and provoke me to anger?" he said.

When, however, the Holy One, blessed is he, saw Abraham, he said, "Here I have found solid rock [*petra*] on which I can build and upon which I can lay the world's foundations." (Bivin's translation in "The Petros-petra Wordplay," p. 34)

41. In the Cave of Letters near Ein Gedi six keys of various sizes were found (Locus 65). The keys date from the time of the Bar Kochva Revolt (132–135 A.D.). See *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. Ephraim Stern (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society and Carta, 1993), 3:830. For a photograph of two of the keys and other household items, see Moshe Pearlman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in the Shrine of the Book* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum Products, 1988), p. 85.

"And" or "In order to" Remarry

(continued from page 17)

In Avot de-Rabbi Natan, version A, chpt. 3 [ed. Schechter, p. 8^a]; parallel to version B, chpt. 4 [ed. Schechter, p. 8^b]...it is because he [the husband] hates her that he wishes she were dead, and as a result he causes propagation and procreation to cease from the earth. It appears that this was the reason Rabbi Akiva permitted a man to divorce his wife if he found another more beautiful than she, since, in Akiva's opinion it is better for him to divorce her than for him to keep her and be beset constantly by the thought: "I wish she were dead." See Derek Eretz Rabbah, chpt 11 [ed. Higger, p. 313]. (*Tosefta Ki-fshutah: A Comprehensive Commentary on the Tosefta* [New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1973], p. 663 [to lines 83–84] [Hebrew])

The Derek Eretz Rabbah passage, to which Lieberman refers, reads:

Ben Azzai says, "He who hates his wife is a murderer, for it is said, 'And invents charges against her' [Deut. 22:14], and in the end he may hire false witnesses to testify against her and have her brought hastily to the place of stoning."

12. Shmuel Safrai has informed me that in several instances Jesus' halachot or rulings follow those of Shammai rather than Hillel. Further, where the status of women is at issue, Jesus' halachot, like Shammai's, always strengthen the woman's position. See J. N. Epstein's discussion of Mk. 7:11–12 (= Mt. 15:5) and Mt. 23:16–18 in his *Introduction to Tannaitic Literature: Mishna, Tosefta and Halakhic Midrashim* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, and Tel Aviv: Dvir Co., 1957), pp. 377–378 (Hebrew).

It is frequently assumed that Jesus was closer in outlook to Hillel than to Shammai. That is not true, as Jesus' halachah on divorce shows. According to Safrai, Jews in the Galilee usually followed the halachot of Shammai (private communication), which often were stricter than those of Hillel. Since Jesus was a Galilean, we should not be surprised that he gave rulings which agree with the opinions of Shammai.

13. On the minor agreements' importance, see Robert L. Lindsey, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1973), pp. xv, 14–19; idem, *The Jesus Sources: Understanding the Gospels* (Tulsa, OK: HaKesher, 1990), pp. 60–65; idem, "The Synoptic Problem: Laying the Groundwork," *Jerusalem Perspective* 19 (Apr. 1989), 2.

In addition to the minor agreement, Matthew and Luke also agree against Mark on the general content of the saying's second half—"And he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery" against "And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

14. Other examples of Hebrew-style doublets in the synoptic gospels are: "eating and drinking...a glutton and a drunkard" (Mt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34); "the wise and understanding" (Lk. 10:21); "prophets and apostles" (Lk. 11:49); "kings and governors" (Lk. 21:12).

Other examples of the synoptic gospels' many parallelisms are: "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out.... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut

it off" (Mt. 5:29–30); "Love you enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt. 5:44); "He makes his sun shine on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt. 5:45); "Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find" (Mt. 7:7; Lk. 11:9); "A disciple is not above his teacher, and a slave is not above his master" (Mt. 10:24–25); "We piped for you but you would not dance; we wailed but you would not mourn" (Mt. 11:17; Lk. 7:32); "My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt. 11:30); "Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush" (Lk. 6:44); "Whoever tries to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Lk. 17:32); "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Mt. 23:11).

15. In Middle Hebrew, the article is often employed to specify the person previously mentioned. In this reconstruction, "the divorced woman," would mean "that divorced woman," the woman divorced in that way. The brilliant English translator Richard Francis Weymouth apparently sensed this, and so translated Lk. 16:18 as: "Every man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries her when so divorced from her husband commits adultery" (*The New Testament in Modern Speech*).

The phrase ἀπὸ ἀνδρός (*apo andros*, from her husband) was probably necessary in Greek to clarify the word ἀπολελυμένην (*apolelymenēn*, [a woman] having been dismissed or discharged), which may not have been clear to Greek readers; however, although the expression does appear once in biblical Hebrew (פִּדְיוֹן מִיָּדָהּ, *SHAH ge-ru-SHAH me'i-SHAH*, a woman divorced from her husband, Lev. 21:7), "from her husband" was unnecessary in Middle Hebrew because the root *g-r-sh* had become a technical term.

16. This and the two preceding sentences express Shmuel Safrai's understanding of Lk. 16:18b (private communication).

17. Their situation would be similar to the situation of a wife and her second husband, who married assuming that her first husband was dead:

The case of a woman whose husband traveled to a country beyond the sea, who, after being told, "Your husband is dead," remarried and then her first husband returned—she must leave them both. [If she wishes to marry again.] she must receive a bill of divorce from both. She can present no claims against either for her marriage settlement...or alimony....A child fathered by either husband [including the first if he resumed living with her] is a bastard.... (Mishnah, Yevamot 10:1)

This is Safrai's suggestion (private communication). There is another possible interpretation of 16:18b, assuming Lk. 16:18 was originally a Hebraic doublet. Jesus may have said: "Any man who divorces his wife and marries another is committing adultery, and any woman who divorces her husband and marries another is committing adultery." Support for this reconstruction comes from a rabbinic saying, quoted above in part:

He who begins to wish that his wife will die and [i.e., in order that] he will inherit her property, or

that she will die *and* [i.e., in order that] he will marry her sister, his wife will outlive him [literally, in the end she will bury him]; likewise, she who begins to wish that her husband will die *and* [i.e., in order that] she will be married to another, her husband will outlive her [literally, in the end he will bury her]. (Tosefta, Sotah 5:10)

Joseph Frankovic pointed out to me the importance of this rabbinic saying as evidence that Jesus' saying may be a Hebraic doublet. In Avot de-Rabbi Natan there is a variant of the Tosefta saying:

He [Rabbi Akiva] also said: "He who begins to wish that his wife will die *and* [i.e., in order that] he will inherit her property, or that she will die *and* [i.e., in order that] he will marry her sister, and he who begins to wish that his brother will die *and* [i.e., in order that] he will marry his wife, they will outlive him [literally, in the end they will bury him during their lifetimes]." About such a man Scripture says, "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever breaks through a fence will be bitten by a snake" [Eccl. 10:8]. (Avot de-Rabbi Natan, version A, chpt. 3 [ed. Schechter, p. 8a])

The above saying from Tosefta is a typical Hebraic doublet: "He who wishes his wife were dead.... and she who wishes her husband were dead...." The saying's second half is a warning to wives. They fall prey to the same sins to which husbands are prone—in this case, wishing for a spouse's death. Like the sins mentioned in Mt. 5:21–22 and 5:27–28, this sin is not an act, but a wicked thought. In Jesus' approach to Torah, a "light" commandment is just as important as a "heavy" commandment (Mt. 5:19)—to avoid murder, one must not be angry with one's brother; to avoid adultery, one must not look lustfully at another man's wife.

The rabbinic saying's structure suggests that Jesus' saying may have been a Hebraic doublet, too. Jesus' saying may contain a "vav of purpose," indicating that he was referring to a husband who divorces his wife for the purpose of marrying another woman. Here, also, along with an intent to acquire property, the husband's motive is to marry another. Notice that *וְהָיָה לָהּ אֵשֶׁת אֲחֵרָה* (*ve-hi-na-SE' le-a-HER*, and she will be married to another) occurs in the second half of the rabbinic saying. This is the feminine form of the expression ("marry another") found in Jesus' saying. The word *אֲחֵרָה* (*a-HER*, another) is the masculine form of *אֲחֵרֶת* (*a-HE-ret*), the word Jesus probably used. The same Hebrew expression appears in a Dead Sea scroll: "He shall not take in addition to her another wife, for she alone shall be with him all the days of her life; and if she dies, he shall marry another from his father's house, from his clan" (11QTemple 57, 18–19).

According to Jewish halachah, a woman cannot divorce her husband; the husband alone can declare a divorce. However, she can scheme to end a marriage relationship in order to marry another. There are two examples of Jewish women contemporary with Jesus who initiated divorce. Marital unfaithfulness, divorce and remarriage, permeated the royal house of King Herod. Josephus mentions two women members of the Herodian family who initiated divorce. The first is Herodias, who deserted her first husband, Herod (son of Herod the Great and Mariamne II), to marry his

half-brother, Antipas (son of Herod the Great and Malthace the Samaritan), with whom she had fallen in love:

They [Herod and Herodias] had a daughter Salome, after whose birth Herodias, taking it into her head to flout the way of our fathers, married Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the same father, who was tetrarch of Galilee; to do this she parted from a living husband. (*Antiq.* 18:136 [Loeb Classical Library]; cf. 18:109ff.)

Salome, Herod the Great's sister, also initiated her divorce:

Some time afterwards Salome had occasion to quarrel with Costobarus [governor of Idumea] and soon sent him a document dissolving their marriage, which was not in accordance with Jewish law. For it is (only) the man who is permitted by us to do this, and not even a divorced woman may marry again on her own initiative unless her former husband consents. Salome, however, did not choose to follow her country's law but acted on her own authority and repudiated her marriage.... (*Antiq.* 15:259–260 [Loeb Classical Library])

Therefore, in line with this alternate interpretation, we may paraphrase Lk. 16:18b as follows: "Any woman who causes her husband to divorce her—for instance, by feigning she no longer is attracted to him—in order to marry another man, is committing adultery." Though possible, this interpretation of Lk. 16:18b is less plausible than Safrai's interpretation since the participants in an early first-century rabbinic debate would probably not speak of a wife divorcing her husband.

Brad H. Young suggests a third interpretation of Lk. 16:18b (*Jesus the Jewish Theologian* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995], pp. 114–115). Young notes that in Jewish halachah a woman who is divorced because of an adulterous relationship is not permitted to marry her paramour (Sotah 5:1); therefore, Lk. 16:18b ("he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery") could mean, "he who marries a woman who obtained a divorce merely for the sake of her second marriage commits adultery." In this interpretation, however, Jesus' statement would not be an exegetical innovation.

18. Safrai points out that an innovation, or its most powerful formulation, usually comes at the end of a sage's teaching (private communication).

19. Safrai believes that Shammai would have been very impressed had he heard Jesus' statement, and would have remarked: "Yes, that's right! That is the logical extension of my ruling that a man may not divorce his wife unless he has found 'a thing of indecency' in her" (private communication).

20. Scripture records that even God himself issued a bill of divorce on the grounds of adultery (Jer. 3:8; Isa. 50:1).

21. Although not stated explicitly in 1 Cor. 7:15, we may assume that Paul is relating to members of the community who married before becoming believers. This assumption is supported by other statements of the apostle, such as his rule that if a woman's husband dies, she is permitted to remarry, "but he [her second husband] must belong to the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). Paul forbade the Corinthians to "be unequally yoked

Page 37:
Ketubbah from Istanbul,
Turkey, 1853. Groom:
Shabbetai Haim, son of
Joseph Haim. Bride:
Kaden, daughter of
Nissim Abraham Alko-
lumbri. Dimensions:
108 x 73 cm.



Postscript

In a recently published article, John Nolland of Trinity College, Bristol, U.K., suggests that the subject of Mark 10:11–12 and parallels is divorce for the sake of remarriage ("The Gospel Prohibition of Divorce: Tradition, History and Meaning," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 58 [1995], 33). Nolland alleges that the Greek church fathers often understood *kai* (*and*), and in the phrase "and marries another" (Mt. 19:9; Mk. 10:11; Lk. 16:18) as denoting purpose; however, he gives no examples of this usage. Instead, he refers the reader to A.-L. Descamps ("Les textes évangéliques sur le mariage," *Revue théologique de Louvain* 9 [1978], 259–286; 11 [1980], 5–50; 16, note 37). Descamps, too, provides no examples, referring the reader to A. Houssiau (*Le lien conjugal dans l'Église ancienne in Mélanges Andrieu-Guitrancourt* [Paris, 1973], p. 571). Houssiau's work has been unavailable to me.

with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14), perhaps referring to marriage with an unbeliever. Thus, *The New English Bible* translates: "Do not unite yourselves with unbelievers; they are no fit mates for you."

22. See Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917, 1924; reprinted in one volume by Ktav Publishing House, New York, 1967), 1:76–77. See also the entry "Divorce" in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 6:126–129. For an excellent introduction to the subject of divorce, see Michael Hilton with Gordian Marshall, *The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism: A Study Guide* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, and New York: Anti-Defamation League B'nai B'rith, 1988), pp. 119–135.

23. The halachah, which is found in the Mishnah (Yevamot 6:6; cf. Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 64^a), states:

No man may neglect the commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply" [Gen. 1:28], unless he already has children: according to the school of Shammai, two sons; according to the school of Hillel, a son and a daughter, as it is written, "Male and female created he them" [Gen. 5:2]. If a man married a woman and lived with her for ten years, but she bore no children, he may not neglect [any longer the commandment to beget children. He must take another wife]. Upon being divorced by her first husband, she may be married to another man, and [if she bore no children] this second husband may live with her for [a maximum of] ten years. If she miscarried, [the ten years] is calculated from the time of the miscarriage. The obligation to "be fruitful and multiply" is incumbent on the man, not the woman. Rabbi Yohanan ben Beroka, however, ruled: "[On them both.] Of them both it is written, 'And God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply."'"

If the barren wife said, "Let Heaven judge between me and you," that is, if she did not want to leave her husband, the sages advised, "Let them make a way of request between them" (Tosefta, Sotah 5:12), in other words, let the couple turn to God in prayer.

The sages were extremely practical and were not above counseling a childless couple to create for themselves an atmosphere of intimacy; therefore, they sometimes made this additional suggestion: "Have an intimate meal together" (Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 4^d, chpt. 11, halachah 13). There is an exquisite story in the Midrash about a sage who offered that advice.

There was a woman in Sidon who lived ten years with her husband without having children. The couple went to Rabbi Shim'on ben Yochai [c. 150 A.D.] and told him they wanted to be divorced. He said to them: "I implore you, just as you were joined together with feasting, do not separate without a festive meal." They accepted his advice. They held their own private celebration, enjoying a lavish meal and drinking freely. When the husband was in a good mood, he said to his wife: "My daughter, choose any precious object from my house you wish and take it with you to your father's house." What did the wife do? As soon as he was asleep, she motioned to her slaves and handmaidens to pick him up and carry him on his bed to her father's house. In the middle of the night, when the effects

of the wine had worn off, he awoke. He said [to his wife]: "My daughter, where am I?" "You are in my father's house," she replied. "What am I doing in your father's house?" he said. She answered: "Didn't you tell me last night, 'Choose any precious object from my house you wish and take it with you to your father's house? There is nothing in the world more precious to me than you.'"

The couple returned to Rabbi Shim'on ben Yochai. He stood and prayed for them, and subsequently the woman became pregnant. (Song of Songs Rabbah 1:4, §2; to 1:4)

Shmuel Safrai called to my attention the rabbinic passages above: the halachah in the Mishnah, the statement in Tosefta, the reference to the Jerusalem Talmud, and the story from the Midrash. I am responsible for the translation of these passages.

24. Notice that God detests a husband who divorces "the wife of your marriage covenant":

You also do this: You cover the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and moan because he no longer pays attention to your oblations or accepts what you offer. You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is a witness between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have betrayed, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.... Do not betray the wife of your youth. "I detest divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel.... (Mal. 2:13–16)

Compare the warnings in Prov. 5:1–23, 6:20–7:27 to flee the adulteress. Notice especially the reference to "the wife of your youth" in 5:18. Cf. Isa. 54:6, "Like a wife deserted and dejected, like a wife of youth who has been rejected."

25. Jn. 7: 11. The best manuscripts of John's gospel do not have 7:53–8:11. In members of manuscript family 13 (mss. 13, 69, 124, etc.), this passage appears after Lk. 21:38. Robert Lindsey, noting the passage's Lukan vocabulary, believed that, originally, it was located between Lk. 19:46 and 47 (*Jesus Rabbi & Lord: The Hebrew Story of Jesus Behind Our Gospels* [Oak Creek, WI: Cornerstone Publishing, 1990], pp. 141–145).

Readers' Perspective

(continued from page 9)

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**Dr. Robert L. Lindsey (d. May 31, 1995), a founding member of the Jerusalem School, pioneered, together with Prof. Flusser, the methodology upon which the School's synoptic research is based.*

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Transliteration Key

HEBREW & ARAMAIC

Syllables of transliterated words are separated by dots. Capitalization is used to indicate the accented syllable in words of more than one syllable. See p. 11 of the Nov/Dec 1989 issue for a full description of the transliteration system used in JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

Consonants

א - ^h (silent)	ב - v	ג - g	ד - d	ה - h (or silent)	ו - v	ז - z
ח - ^h	ט - t	י - y (or silent)	כ - k	ל - l	מ - m	נ - n
ס - s	ע - ^h	פ - p	צ - ^h	ק - k	ר - r	ש - sh
ת - t	ך - k	ץ - ^h	ף - f	ף - f	ף - f	ף - f

א - ^h (voiceless guttural)

ב - v

ג - g

ד - d

ה - h (or silent)

ו - v

ז - z

ח - ^h

ט - t

י - y (or silent)

כ - k

ל - l

מ - m

נ - n

ס - s

ע - ^h

פ - p

צ - ^h

ק - k

ר - r

ש - sh

ת - t

ך - k

ץ - ^h

ף - f

ס - s

ע - ^h

פ - p

צ - ^h

ק - k

ר - r

ש - sh

ת - t

*The form of the letter

at the end of a word.

Vowels

(The א is used here as

a point of reference.)

א - ^h

ב - v

ג - g

ד - d

ה - h (or silent)

ו - v

ז - z

ח - ^h

ט - t

י - y (or silent)

כ - k

ל - l

מ - m

נ - n

ס - s

ע - ^h

פ - p

צ - ^h

ק - k

ר - r

ש - sh

ת - t

ך - k

ץ - ^h

ף - f

Glossary

halachah — (הלכה, *ha-la-KAH*; plural: הלכות, *ha-la-KOT*, halachot) law, regulation; the legal ruling on a particular issue; the body of Jewish law, especially the legal part of rabbinic literature.

midrash — (מדרש, *mid-RASH*; pl., *midrashim*) literally, an inquiry or investigation, but as a technical term, "midrash" refers to a rabbinic interpretation, or exposition, of biblical text. The term can also be applied to a collection of such expositions or, capitalized, to the whole midrashic literature written during the first millennium A.D.

minor agreements — instances within the pericopae of the triple tradition where Matthew and Luke exhibit verbal agreement against Mark. Minor agreements usually consist of only a word or phrase not found in Mark's parallel passage.

pericope (*pa-rik'-o-pe*) — an episode or story unit in the synoptic gospels; a division of a synopsis. Plural: pericopae.

Septuagint — the second-century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

synoptic — adjective derived from *συνωπτικός* (*synopasthai*), a Greek word meaning "to view together or at the same time"; specifically, refers to the first three gospels of the New Testament. The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are so similar in form and content that it is convenient to view them together. The three are often printed in parallel columns; such a book is called a synopsis. With the aid of a synopsis, the synoptic gospels can be studied synoptically, that is, studied by comparing the similarities and differences between them. The gospel of John is so unlike the synoptic gospels that there is limited value in trying to view it "synoptically" with the other three gospels.

tannaic (*ta-na-'ik*) — pertaining to the tannaim (תנאים, *ta-na-'IM*), sages from Hillel's time (died c. 10 B.C.) until the generation (c. 230 A.D.) after Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi, the compiler of the Mishnah. Singular: *tanna*; *ta-na'*, *tanna*).

targum — an Aramaic translation of a portion of the Hebrew Scriptures. Plural: *targumim* or *targums*. The *targumim* not only provided a translation for those who did not understand the original language, but also provided an interpretation of the biblical text. Since the inspired text could not be changed or altered in even the smallest way, the targum made possible the insertion of various explanations and clarifications that amplified the text.

translation Greek — the Greek found in Greek texts that have been translated from Hebrew or Aramaic.

triple tradition — the pericopae shared by all three synoptic gospels (for example, the Baptism of Jesus, the Stilling of the Storm).

Diphthongs

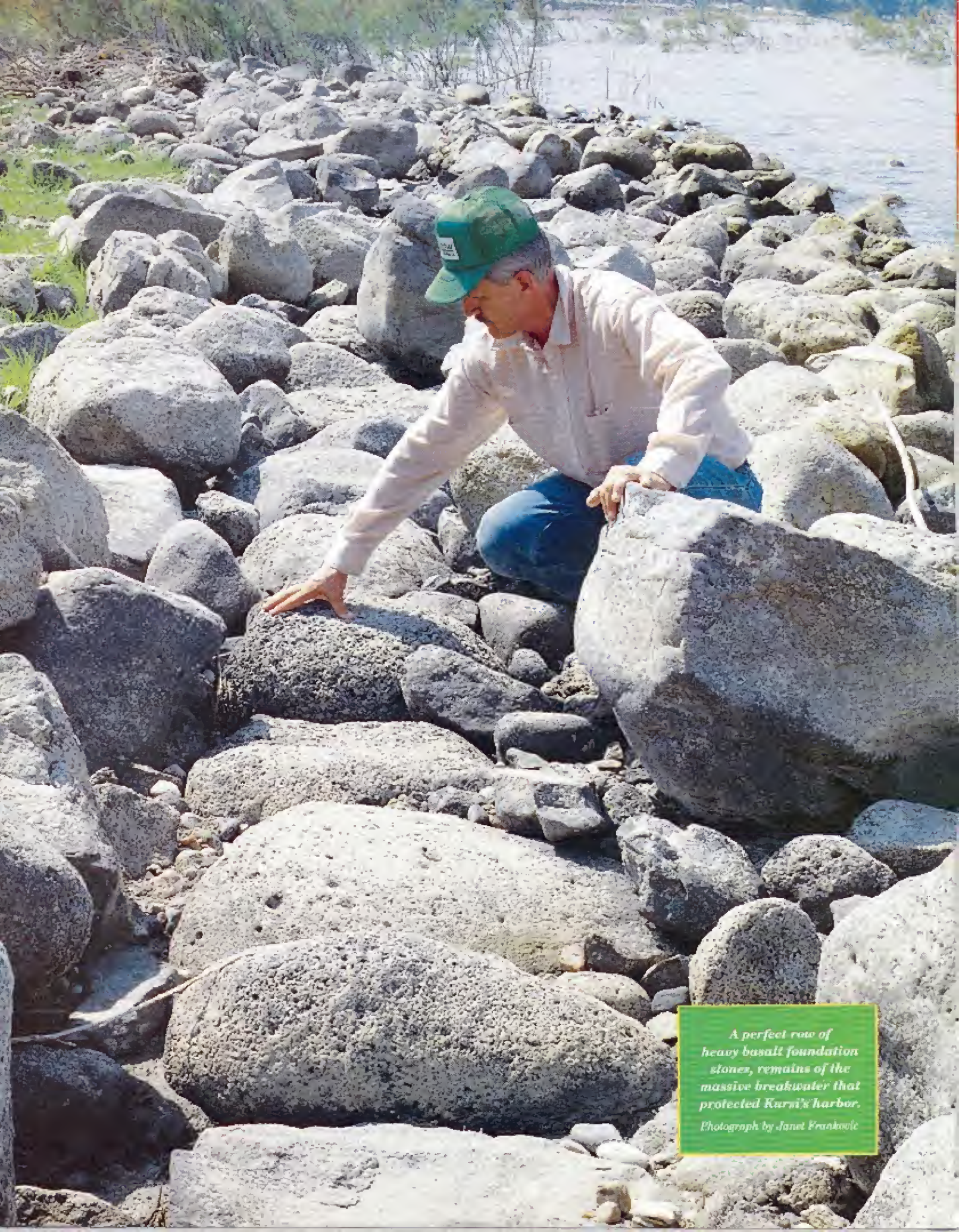
*א - ai

*א - oi

*א - ui

GREEK

Transliterations are based on the Society of Biblical Literature system.



A perfect row of heavy basalt foundation stones, remains of the massive breakwater that protected Kurni's harbor.
Photograph by Janet Frankovic